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Ferrer Taps Nonprofit Medina's Natural Products Library in Search of New Antibiotics

Spanish firm says it is focusing its anti-infectives discovery work toward niche indications.

Spain's Grupo Ferrer and Fundación Medina (Fundación Centro de Excelencia en Investigación de Medicamentos Innovadores en Andalucía) signed a research collaboration centered on the discovery of novel antibiotics from Medina's natural product libraries.

Medina is a nonprofit research organization focused on drug discovery from microbial natural products, and offers what it claims is one of the world's most productive collections of filamentous fungi, actinomycetes, and bacteria for discovery of secondary metabolites. Building on the natural products expertise of what was Merck Basic Research Center in Madrid (CIBE), the organization operates as a public-private partnership between Merck Sharp and Dohme de España, the Consejería de Salud and the Consejería de Innovación, Ciencia y Empresa from the Junta de Andalucía, and the University of Granada. In addition to exploiting its discovery of new leads from microbial natural products, Medina also offers drug development services based on its high-throughput ADME/Tox screening platform.

Grupo Ferrer's existing drug pipeline includes two clinical-stage antibiotics. Ozenoxacin is a nonfluorinated quinolone, which is undergoing Phase III evaluation as a potential treatment for topical infections. Arasertaconazole is an azole antifungal agent progressing through Phase II development for the treatment of vulvo-vaginal infections. Ferrer says it has recently shifted its anti-infectives programs towards niche indications, including potential candidates derived from natural sources.

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