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IIT-R scientists work on treating chikungunya

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A group of scientists at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee, has developed a small molecule that has good antiviral activity against chikungunya virus.

The researchers have reported that the molecule, Pep-I, has superior antiviral activity against chikungunya virus. The small molecule was found to effectively bind to the protein of the virus (nsP2 protease) and prevent the virus from replicating.

The team also tested whether the molecules were specifically inhibiting only the chikungunya virus. They used Sindbis virus, the model virus of the genus alphavirus to which chikungunya belongs, to test the specificity. However, the two molecules did not show antiviral activity against Sindbis virus indicating that they are very specific to chikungunya virus.