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J&J joins forces with Monash University to advance novel technology

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The collaboration was facilitated by Johnson & Johnson Innovation

Janssen Pharmaceutica N.V, one of the Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson has announced that it has entered into a sponsored research agreement with the Monash Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences (MIPS) at Monash University to advance the development of an inhaled version of oxytocin to help prevent and manage Post-Partum Hemorrhage (PPH).

PPH, a condition of excessive blood loss after birth, is the leading cause of maternal mortality globally, resulting in an estimated 60,000 deaths per year, overwhelmingly in resource-limited countries.

Jaak Peeters, Global Head, Johnson & Johnson Global Public Health, Janssen-Cilag GmBH said, “When you consider the lifetime risk of dying for a woman in child birth is 23 times higher in resource-limited settings than anywhere else you must act if you have the scientific capabilities to potentially help overcome that inequity. We hope to address this significant unmet need by helping accelerate the development of what would be a truly life-saving innovation and give women and their families everywhere the same chance at life.”

Most deaths resulting from PPH could be avoided if access to suitable medical innovation were available. It is effectively managed in developed countries using the gold standard therapy, oxytocin, a manufactured form of a natural hormone. Accessibility to quality oxytocin in resource-poor countries is however limited as current products are only available in an injectable form requiring supply and storage under refrigerated conditions and trained personnel to administer the product safely.

This new research agreement builds on an existing collaboration between MIPS and GSK which was established in 2014. Formulated as a dry powder, inhaled oxytocin would eliminate the need for refrigerated storage conditions, while delivering oxytocin via a powder inhaler could ease its administration allowing for its use by frontline health workers, birth attendants and mothers themselves. Combined, this innovative approach also aims to support attended births outside of medical facilities.

Professor Michelle McIntosh, Monash Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Monash University who has pioneered the inhaled delivery of oxytocin said, “This is an exciting opportunity to expand this collaboration between industry and academia to develop an important healthcare innovation that aims to address a critical unmet medical need. There is a massive ripple effect when a mother dies – it's a very significant burden for these families and communities, and we are committed to bringing the gold-standard care to all mothers.”

Kathy Connell, Senior Director, New Ventures, Australia & New Zealand, Johnson & Johnson Innovation said, “Australia is a thriving hub of life science innovation with a proven track-record of delivering innovative healthcare solutions for people globally. This latest agreement between Johnson & Johnson and Monash University, an internationally renowned leader in pharmacy and pharmacology, builds on our legacy of innovative academic-industry collaborations in Australia focused on developing life-saving treatments for the highest unmet needs.”

The collaboration was facilitated by Johnson & Johnson Innovation. The announcement was made recently at the Johnson & Johnson Innovation Partnering Office at Monash which was established in January 2018 by Johnson & Johnson Innovation, Australia’s Victorian Government and Monash University to enable access by Victorian researchers and companies to the expertise across Johnson & Johnson’s scientist research, investor and commercial operations.