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OSDD, DNDi join hands on Leishmaniasis research

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In the two day meeting held between May 24-25, at Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), New Delhi under Open Source Drug Discovery (OSDD) programme, the deliberations were conducted on the efforts to find new drugs for Leishmaniasis with experts from the Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative (DNDi), a collaborative, patients' needs-driven, non-profit drug research and development (R&D) organization. The area is quite new area for OSDD and the meeting was held to deliberate on the ongoing research at CSIR and DNDi and to chart the further course of action through active collaboration.

Leishmaniasis is a disease caused by protozoan parasites that belong to the genus Leishmania and is transmitted by the bite of certain species of sand fly. The Indian subcontinent (India, Nepal and Bangladesh) is one of the main areas affected by Visceral Leishmaniasis worldwide. It accounts for about 67% of total cases reported with almost 200 million people at risk of contracting the disease. The governments of India, Bangladesh and Nepal have launched a joint programme to eliminate VL as a public health problem in the coming years.

The DNDi is now also embarking on a project to unravel the genome of this causative agent and explore ways and means to reduce the risk of this disease to the population in peril and to improve the treatment of patients.