Burnet Institute Receives Grand Challenges Tuberculosis Biomarkers Grant

Melbourne, Australia – The Burnet Institute announced today that it will receive a tuberculosis (TB) biomarkers grant through the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation’s Grand Challenges in Global Health program, an initiative which seeks to overcome persistent bottlenecks in creating new tools that can radically improve health in the developing world. Associate Professor David Anderson, Head of the Anderson Diagnostic Development Laboratory and Deputy Director of the Burnet Institute, will pursue an innovative research project to identify and validate TB biomarkers, titled "Novel reagents for the serological diagnosis of tuberculosis".

The Grand Challenges TB biomarkers program provides funding for groundbreaking research into TB biomarkers for the development of a low-cost, simple to use tool that can quickly and accurately diagnose TB in developing countries.

“There is an urgent need to break through barriers in biomarker research in order to develop a highly-sensitive point-of-care diagnostic to improve identification of active TB cases,” said Chris Wilson, Director of Global Health Discovery at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. “We hope these innovative ideas lead to effective and affordable TB diagnostics that can make an impact on one of the world’s deadliest infectious diseases.”

Associate Professor David Anderson’s project is one of ten Grand Challenges TB biomarkers grants announced today.

Using just a drop of blood, an innovative diagnostic test being developed at the Burnet Institute in Melbourne may be able to detect if a patient has tuberculosis (TB).

“Our approach for TB diagnosis is novel, and we look forward to working with the Gates Foundation and the other grant recipients to identify the best approach for TB diagnosis in the developing world,” Associate Professor Anderson said.
“If this project is successful it could have a big impact because we are developing a relatively simple biomarker that could form the basis of an inexpensive test, suitable for low-resourced countries.”

About Grand Challenges in Global Health
The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation recognizes that solving our greatest global health issues is a long-term effort. Through Grand Challenges in Global Health, the foundation is committed to seeking out and rewarding not only established researchers in science and technology, but also young investigators, entrepreneurs and innovators to help expand the pipeline of ideas to fight diseases that claim millions of lives each year. We anticipate that additional grants will be awarded through the Grand Challenges program in the future.

The Burnet Institute is an Australian, not-for-profit, unaligned and independent medical research and public health organisation whose purpose is to improve the health of disadvantage, poor or otherwise vulnerable people in Australia and internationally.