



Press release

For immediate release

Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus Aureus* (MRSA)

Clinical studies start on new screening test

Quebec City, Wednesday, June 25, 2003 – Infectio Diagnostic Inc. (IDI) has completed development of a new ultra-rapid screening test for the extremely virulent methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA).

Clinical studies will be completed in time to submit results to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the United States and to Health Canada for approval. IDI is looking to market its product before the end of the year.

This test will enable detection of MRSA in approximately one hour, whereas the existing method, involving a bacterial culture, can take up to two or three days. “There is a potential here of enormous savings for the health system,” predicts Mr. Jacques Milette, Vice President, Sales and Business Development for IDI.

Every year in the United States, nearly two million people contract an infection in a hospital setting (a nosocomial infection), with 90,000 die as a result. This represents almost one death every six minutes. The number of such deaths in Canada is estimated at 12,000 every year, of which 2,000 to 3,000 occur in Quebec, according to the *Association des médecins microbiologiste infectiologues du Québec* (AMMIQ). AMMIQ also points out that the number of hospital patients carrying MRSA increased by 70% between 2000 and 2002.

Ultra-rapid detection of MRSA would prevent the spread of infection and reduce complications related to infections contracted in hospitals, thereby shortening the hospital stay of many patients. Furthermore, by rapidly identifying patients not carrying the bacterium, hospitals could avoid preventive isolations that represent significant costs to the health system.

The molecular test developed by IDI, a Quebec company with some fifty employees, involves detecting the resistance gene of *Staphylococcus aureus* in under one hour. “In and of itself, this is a major accomplishment that represents a revolution in microbiology,” emphasized Mr. Milette.

A number of European countries - France in particular - and the United States have declared war on MRSA. This type of infection in hospitals represents huge costs to the health system, and in coming years a tightening of international standards for the control of such infections can be expected.

IDI is already applying this internationally unique technology to the identification of Group B Streptococcus in pregnant women. Marketing of this test, known as **IDI-Strep B™**, has just begun.

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