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Drug-Free Antibacterial Hybrid Biopolymers for Medical Applications

Year 1 Progress Report

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Abstract

This report describes the progress in the first year of HyMedPoly, which ran from January to December 2015. It details general progress, the recruitment of Early Stage Researchers, ESR development, management approaches and communication activities. The project is proceeding to the Description of Work with mitigation actions in place to account for deviations from the original plan.

[End of abstract]

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HyMedPoly aims to develop new therapies based on biomedical polymers and inorganic materials. Nine universities and companies from across Europe are creating a cohort of fifteen European Industrial Doctoral researchers (Early Stage Researchers) to synthesise new biopolymers with added antibacterial functionality and develop functionalised bioactive ceramics and glasses that can act as active agents to kill bacteria and prevent their growth.

This report, D6.13, describes the progress in the first year of HyMedPoly, which ran from January to December 2015.

At the end of Year 1 progress is good with the project proceeding according to the approach detailed in the Description of Work (DoW). All of the deliverables due in Year 1 have been submitted and both milestones have been completed. When necessary, mitigation actions to account for deviations from the original plan have been taken to ensure the project provides the final outcomes in the DoW.

The project group followed a common approach to advertisement of the Early Stage Researcher vacancies and recruitment, which included publicising through the Euraxess site and an online application process developed specifically for the project. 322 applications for the fifteen positions were received by the application deadline.

Eleven of the fifteen Early Stage Researchers (ESRs) had been recruited at the end of Year 1, with eight contracted and started work. The other three will start early in Year 2. Plans are in place to fill the remaining vacancies early in Year 2. The gender balance of the researchers contracted by the end of Year 1 was 5:3, Female: Male.

Each of the ESRs has a career development plan to help meet their long-term career goals. The plans include short-term training activities with clearly defined objective not only in areas such disseminating research results through publications and conferences but also in research management, communication skills and professional networking.

HyMedPoly has started to arrange a series of training events and conferences for the ESRs to help meet these goals. Industry training activities cover best practice in managing collaborative R&D projects. Scientific aspects of the area of antibacterial biomaterials are covered through a series of "Summer schools" and Workshops. The first training event was being organised at the end of Year 1 for February 2016 at Politecnico di Torino, "Biodegradable polymers synthesis and functionalization".

Project management has engaged the project consortium members through both face-to-face and virtual meetings. The Launch meeting held in Project Quarter 1 agreed meeting the recruitment approach and early project actions. Telephone conference meetings held throughout the first year have progressed these activities, and planned the first Summer School

Communication activities in Year 1 focused on raising the profile of the project and the research opportunities available and on ensuring efficient internal communication. The main vehicle for external communications is the project website, www.hymedpoly.eu , which was set up during Year 1.

A password protected file sharing site was established which provides facilities to store project information such as meeting minutes, document templates, project logos and guidelines, which is open to all parties. Additionally group e-mail lists were set up to ease communications between all of the project members

As a consequence of these activities, Year 1 work has raised awareness of HyMedPoly and the ESR positions. The project group expects the impact to grow from Year 2 onwards as the ESRs start to produce research results and the project group delivers the training events and conferences.

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