

Studying Neglected Tropical Diseases



James McKerrow

Distinguished Professor, Pathology Associate Vice Chancellor, Health Sciences Distinguished Professor and Dean, Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences

CURRENT RESEARCH

Researching NTD's for better drug development

Many people do not know what schistosomiasis is, let alone its symptoms, yet schistosomiasis is a high-risk tropical disease affecting nearly 250 million people worldwide. There is a class of diseases called the Neglected Tropical Diseases, to which schistosomiasis belongs. They are characterized by their widespread presence in tropical regions combined with a general neglect for treatment. Dr. James McKerrow of University of California, San Diego (UCSD), is working to discover treatments synthesized from compounds donated by chemical teams or extracted from natural environments. He is screening potential drugs against the organisms causing NTDs in a unique end-to-end approach that grants him extensive oversight over the entire drug development process. NTDs affect millions of individuals in some of the most impoverished regions of the world, and developing inexpensive yet effective drugs promises to greatly increase the quality of life for infected individuals and the productivity and quality of life of their communities. By deriving remedies from natural products, there is an added benefit of increasing local interest in protecting natural environments of biological diversity.

Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) refer to any of 17 diseases that affect hundreds of millions of people, typically in the developing regions of Africa, Asia, and the Americas. They are not uncommon, but many are not popularly known. Furthermore, since they affect primarily poor regions of the world, there is little to no interest shown by the pharmaceutical industry in developing therapy. There are no vaccines for any of these diseases, and drugs, if effective, are decades old and fraught with side-effects. These diseases are...

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AFFILIATION

 University of California, San Diego

EDUCATION

- M.D. in Biology, 1976
State University of New York
- Ph.D. in Biology, 1973
University of California, San Diego
- B.Sc. in Chemistry & Biology, 1968
Haverford College

AWARDS

- Commencement Speaker, Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
- President's Symposium Speaker
- Mendel Honorary Medal
- Essential Core Teaching Award
- President's Speaker

RESEARCH AREAS

Life Science, Infectious, Pediatric

FUNDING REQUEST

Your contributions will be crucial in efforts to sustain the screening of compounds against organisms that produce neglected diseases. This is generally an underfunded aspect of NTD's. Funding will also help sustain the drug development pipeline by offsetting the labor and equipment costs associated with maintaining pharmaceutical development outside of industry.