



Newsletter from the ART (Antibiotics Round Table)

(18.04.2019)

The ART is an interdisciplinary group of more than 40 experts in medicine, research and economics coming from Swiss universities and polytechnic schools, as well as of committed personalities from industry. It aims to stimulate Switzerland's contribution to innovation, research and development in the field of antibiotic resistance, in particular by promoting the development and market access of innovative antimicrobial drugs.

The current activities of the ART are pursued by a core group formed by Bea Heim (member of the Swiss Parliament), R. Blankart (KPM Centre of Public Management, University of Bern and sitem-insel AG), S. Leib (Institut für Infektionskrankheiten, Universität Bern), J.-C. Piffaretti (Interlifescience, Massagno).

Next meeting

The next meeting of the ART will be held on June 24, 2019 from 14:00-16:00 in Bern, at the new building of the Swiss Institute for Translational and Entrepreneurial Medicine (sitem-insel). Aim of this meeting is to define the strategy and the next actions of the ART. The agenda will be sent later.

Thanks to Rudolf Blankart, at the end of the meeting, we will have the opportunity to visit the bespoke architecture devoted to translational medicine, which stimulates interdisciplinary and interprofessional collaboration.

Brief summary of the work done

As you certainly remember, following discussions we had with you, the ART core group focused its action to promote a structured dialogue between the involved federal offices, the pharmaceutical industry, science, and society in order to investigate a new financing model to bring innovative antibiotics to the market. The ART core group met with different representatives of the private sector (e.g., SME) and with organisations active in the research and development on new antibiotics; in addition, the ART objectives have been presented at meetings of scientific societies such as the Swiss Society for Infectious Diseases. However, much of the efforts consisted in presenting our views at the political level e.g., with a presentation to the Social Security and Health Committee of the Swiss Council of States. In order to convince the Federal Government to promote the above-mentioned dialogue, we had in 2018 a number of meetings (or close contacts) with the Federal Councillors (and their direct co-workers) in charge of the following departments: Economic Affairs, Finance, Defence, Foreign Affairs, and Home Affairs.

Remarkably, the Federal Department of Home Affairs has been discussing the update of the Swiss “Masterplan to enhance biomedical research and technology” and we hoped that our dialogue proposal would be optimally integrated in its new version. However, our concerns have not been implemented in the Masterplan for a number of reasons. To make the story short, we can conclude

that we have been successful in raising awareness on the antibiotics issue, as well as gained sympathy, at the political level, but we could not really stimulate goodwill to proceed further.

Next steps

In the short term, the ART core group will meet executive representatives of GARD-P (Global Antibiotic Research & Development Partnership) which is a global R&D initiative of the WHO. GARD-P focusses on fighting antimicrobial resistance and facilitating access to innovative antibiotics, joining public and private efforts. The aim of the upcoming meeting is to investigate whether we can develop a “joint venture” to proceed in reaching our common objectives. In conclusion, as stated above, the next meeting will be important to update and (re)focus the ART strategy.

We look forward to meeting you on June 24, 2019, 14h-16h in Bern. Please, block the date!

Bea Heim, J.-C. Piffaretti, R. Blankart, S. Leib