

August 30, 2016



# Spotlight Innovation Research Collaborator Prof. Hengli Tang Publishes Landmark Study in Nature Medicine

## Drug Repurposing Screen Identifies Lead Compounds for Anti-Zika Virus Drug Development

WEST DES MOINES, Iowa, Aug. 30, 2016 /PRNewswire/ -- Spotlight Innovation Inc. (OTCQB: STLT) announced today that Prof. Hengli Tang has co-authored a study<sup>1</sup>, published in *Nature Medicine* on August 29, 2016, reporting two classes of compounds: one that protects Zika virus-infected neural cells from programmed cell death ("apoptosis") and another that directly inhibits Zika virus replication. According to the study, when used in combination, compounds from the two classes enhanced the neuroprotective effect.



Since the resurgence of Zika over a year ago, efforts to combat the virus have focused largely on preventing infection through vaccine development, mosquito control measures and public health education. The availability of anti-Zika therapeutics could provide physicians with tools to treat patients who have already been infected. Funding provided by Spotlight Innovation under a Sponsored Research Agreement with Florida State University will enable Prof. Tang and his collaborators to expand on their discoveries and to accelerate the development of safe and effective drugs to treat patients infected with Zika.

Geoffrey Laff, Ph.D., Spotlight Innovation's Senior Vice President of Business Development, commented, "Prof. Tang's important work reinforces our long-standing conviction that he and his collaborators will significantly advance the field of anti-Zika virus drug development."

In a recent publication<sup>2</sup>, Prof. Tang and his collaborators demonstrated that Zika virus can infect and replicate within human embryonic cortical neural progenitor cells. Zika infection in pregnant women can cause neurological birth defects, including microcephaly, a condition in which a child is born with an abnormally small head as a result of incomplete brain development.

## About Spotlight Innovation Inc.

Spotlight Innovation Inc. (OTCQB: STLT) identifies and acquires rights to innovative, proprietary technologies designed to address unmet medical needs, with an emphasis on rare, emerging and neglected diseases. To find and evaluate unique opportunities, we leverage our extensive relationships with leading scientists, academic institutions and other sources. We provide value-added development capability to accelerate development progress. When scientifically significant benchmarks have been achieved, we will endeavor to partner with proven market leaders via sale, out-license or strategic alliance. For more information, visit [www.spotlightinnovation.com](http://www.spotlightinnovation.com) or follow us on [www.twitter.com/spotlightinno](http://www.twitter.com/spotlightinno).

## Forward Looking Statements

Statements in this press release that are not purely historical are forward-looking statements. Forward-looking statements herein include statements regarding the discoveries by Prof. Tang and collaborators relating to the Zika virus, and Spotlight Innovation's efforts to develop and commercialize its various technologies. Actual outcomes and actual results could differ materially from those in such forward-looking statements. Factors that could cause actual results to differ materially include risks and uncertainties such as the inability to finance the planned development of the technologies, the inability to hire appropriate staff to develop the technologies, unforeseen technical difficulties in developing the technologies, the inability to obtain regulatory approval for human use, competitors' therapies proving to be more effective, cheaper or otherwise more preferable, the inability to market a product, all of which could, among other things, delay or prevent product release, as well as other factors expressed from time to time in Spotlight Innovation's periodic filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "SEC"). As a result, this press release should be read in conjunction with Spotlight Innovation's periodic filings with the SEC. The forward-looking statements contained herein are made only as of the date of this press release and Spotlight Innovation undertakes no obligation to publicly update such forward-looking statements to reflect subsequent events or circumstances.

<sup>1</sup> Miao X, Lee EM, Wen Z, Cheng Y, Huang W-K, Qian X, TCW J, Kouznetsova J, Ogden SC, Hammack C, Nguyen HN, Itkin M, Hanna C, Shinn P, Allen C, Michael SG, Simeonov A, Huang W, Christian KM, Goate A, Brennand K, Huang R, Menghang X, Ming G-L, Zheng W, Song H, Tang H. Identification of Small Molecule Inhibitors of Zika Virus Infection and Induced Neural Cell Death Via a Drug Repurposing Screen. *Nature Med.* 2016 Aug 29.

<http://www.nature.com/nm/journal/vaop/ncurrent/full/nm.4184.html>

<sup>2</sup> Tang H, Hammack C, Ogden SC, Wen Z, Qian X, Li Y, Yao B, Shin J, Zhang F, Lee EM, Christian KM, Didier RA, Jin P, Song H, Ming GL. Zika Virus Infects Human Cortical Neural Progenitors and Attenuates Their Growth. *Cell Stem Cell.* 2016 Mar 3. pii: S1934-5909(16)00106-5. doi: 10.1016/j.stem.2016.02.016. [Epub ahead of print]

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26952870>

Logo - <https://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20160825/401525LOGO>

To view the original version on PR Newswire, visit: <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/spotlight-innovation-research-collaborator-prof-hengli-tang-publishes-landmark-study-in-nature-medicine-300319798.html>

SOURCE Spotlight Innovation Inc.