

Press release ViroRed Workshop, Panamá City, 25th – 27th of April 2016

Panamá City/Hamburg, 27th of April 2016. On occasion of the workshop of VIRORED under the PanDengue Programme of CYTED, Altona Diagnostics GmbH participated with its RealStar® real-time RT PCR kits for chikungunya virus, dengue virus and Zika virus in the practical training of the workshop. The meeting of members of the National Laboratories of various countries in Latin America took place at the Instituto Conmemorativo Gorgas de Estudios de la Salud in Panamá City and was organized under the chairmanship of Dr. Fernando de Ory, coordinator of the Scientific Executive Committee of ViroRed Network (Emerging Viruses network), from the Instituto de Salud Carlos III, Spain.

35 participants from sixteen countries discussed during the three days the challenges in the laboratory for the diagnosis of respiratory and arthropod borne viruses with a special focus on the diagnostics of Zika virus on the background of the other arboviruses present in Latin American countries and during the current outbreak of Zika virus.

In the hands of the workshop participants the RealStar® assays showed comparable results to the laboratory's in-house assays, which were based on the recommended primers and probes of the U.S. Centre of Disease Control, and which were run on the same sample for Zika, chikungunya and dengue viruses. An additional experiment revealed that Altona Diagnostics' RealStar® Chikungunya RT PCR Kit 2.0 does not cross-react with Mayaro virus, which is closely related to chikungunya virus. The sample material of an extraction of Mayaro virus cell culture supernatant was a courtesy donation of the Instituto de Salud Carlos III, Spain.

"It was an honour for us to participate in this highly ranked workshop," said Volkan Duvan, Technical Support at Altona Diagnostics. "For us, it is of unmet value to see, how our products are performing in end user's laboratories and in very good comparison with their currently used in-house assays." Hans Kuhn, Head of Finance, added: "Even more valuable is the exchange with colleagues from the laboratories of the effected countries. This exchange is crucial for a manufacturer like Altona Diagnostics, especially in an outbreak situation of a rather new infectious agent, where the knowledge base is rather scarce." During the training the three assays were used to detect the viruses from the same samples and were run in parallel on the same 96 well plate, showing the effectivity and simple and time saving use of the RealStar kits.

About VIRORED

VIRORED (Emerging Viruses network, www.virored-cyted.isciii.es) is targeting the development and validation of technologies for the detecting of viruses with clinical relevance in Latin America. The network is helping with the implementation of these technologies in the member states of Latin American countries. Currently, Dr. Fernando de Ory, Instituto de Salud Carlos III, the Spanish National Reference Centre for Microbiology, in Majadahonda, Madrid) is the coordinator of VIRORED.

VIRORED is financed by CYTED, an international programme created by governments of 21 Latin-American countries to promote cooperation in science, technology and innovation (www.cyted.org).

About Altona

Altona Diagnostics GmbH, founded in 2007 and based in Hamburg, Germany, is focused on developing and manufacturing molecular diagnostic test systems for the detection and quantification of pathogens related to human infectious diseases. Altona Diagnostics is ISO 13485 certified and manufactures under cGMP guidelines. Among other activities, Altona Diagnostics was one of the first companies to make reliable molecular diagnostic kits commercially available during outbreak situations like with swine Flu, EHEC, MERS, chikungunya virus and Ebola virus.

January this year Altona Diagnostics GmbH has launched a CE-IVD marked real-time RT PCR kit for the detection Zika virus to add the assay to the panel for chikungunya virus and dengue virus, enabling the parallel detection of viruses with similar clinical symptoms.