

Message

---

**From:** Gray, Eddie [Eddie.Gray@dhsc.gov.uk]  
**Sent:** 09/09/2021 09:48:13  
**To:** Vallance, Patrick [I&S] [p.vallance1@[I&S]]; John Bell (Regius Professor) [regius@medsci.ox.ac.uk]  
**CC:** Government Chief Scientific Adviser [I&S] [gcsa@[I&S]]  
**Subject:** Re: Antivirals

Agree with all of this.

This winter will now be what it will be. We have at least stopped DHSC trying to negotiate itself down under pressure from Treasury. SOS has been impressive, is running with our proposal and telling officials that if any compromises are to be made he will make them with PM and Chancellor, not officials.

In addition to everything you've said here we will need to think about taking John's ideas forward in context of Government attitude to markets and legal risks of 'non competitive' purchase. I can hear you sighing! , and I don't disagree but big lesson from this winter is time spent thinking this through will save pain later  
Eddie

---

**From:** Vallance, Patrick [I&S] <P.Vallance1@[I&S]>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 9, 2021 7:59:05 AM  
**To:** John Bell (Regius Professor) <regius@medsci.ox.ac.uk>; Gray, Eddie <Eddie.Gray@dhsc.gov.uk>  
**Cc:** Government Chief Scientific Adviser [I&S] <GCSA@[I&S]>  
**Subject:** RE: Antivirals

I think we need to do the following:

1. Get what we can for this winter – this is a decision for DHSC and HMT etc and is in train.
2. Make sure that we have a clear R&D plan for what we need answers to for the immediately available antivirals and that this is a key part of our plan for the next few months
3. Ensure we have a clear domestic manufacturing proposal
4. Look for new opportunities coming through the various pipelines as per John's note.

I think we have a lot of focus on 1, and now need to get the others covered. Outcome on 1 will obviously be a choice for ministers but we must make sure the implications are clear from a scientific and medical perspective.

Patrick

---

**From:** John Bell (Regius Professor) <regius@medsci.ox.ac.uk>  
**Sent:** 08 September 2021 11:19  
**To:** Gray, Eddie <Eddie.Gray@dhsc.gov.uk>  
**Cc:** Vallance, Patrick [I&S] <P.Vallance1@[I&S]>  
**Subject:** Re: Antivirals

I heard this has not gone well. The risk of a new potentially bad variant is real, the virus is still developing new antigenic space at a fair clip which suggests there is still a way to go. If we get a vaccine escape on top of delta we have a big issue. Patrick and I spoke last weekend and I think we need to begin to grip this is another way. Gates and Calibr would like to partner with our challenge model and the MHRA. WE could accelerate development of a cheap effective molecule in record time if we line it up. Would you be prepared to back that approach. If so I will talk to June and the challenge team. jb

---

**From:** "Gray, Eddie" <Eddie.Gray@dhsc.gov.uk>  
**Date:** Wednesday, 8 September 2021 at 10:14  
**To:** John Bell <regius@medsci.ox.ac.uk>

Cc: "Vallance, Patrick (I&S)" <P.Vallance1@I&S>

Subject: Re: Antivirals

Confidential

John

Many thanks. They look like great names. I have delayed replying because I do think the government response to this winter is important in assessing whether the next phase is worth all our efforts.

As of now that response is most frustrating. We have ordered a small amount of Pf, but late and at a level that we will get no priority. Mck have given us a deadline of Friday and we are in danger of falling in same trap. Very annoying. SoS has supported our recommendations which is good, but getting decision across him, PM and Chancellor ridiculously hard.

Will get back to you

Regards

Eddie

---

From: John Bell (Regius Professor) <regius@medsci.ox.ac.uk>

Sent: Friday, September 3, 2021 10:12:36 AM

To: Gray, Eddie <Eddie.Gray@dhsc.gov.uk>

Cc: Vallance, Patrick (I&S) <P.Vallance1@I&S>

Subject: Antivirals

Dear Eddie

I have now managed to pull together a significant list of people who could help us with an overview of available antivirals in the system and help you and the antiviral team review the literature. You won't be surprised to hear that I have been talking to a number of these people off-line and have now a growing list of antivirals that are early in development. The people I have been talking to have a lot of insight into what is out there although the companies are not sharing much detail, so it is very hard to work out where these programmes are going. My money at the moment would probably be on the Merck compound as the leading small molecule. There is a range of other rather more disruptive technologies in play, including SiRNAs and circularised peptides, but these all have delivery problems and, at the moment, I think you need to be going for simple, oral molecules.

I have been talking to NR who you probably know and who has been guiding the Gates Foundation efforts through Calibr, to identify new compounds. NR and I have produced a list of additional people beyond NR who could perhaps sit down with us and help. They include:

Rob Jordan – ex-Gilead, Vir

Eddy Littler – who you know from GSK

Ken Powell – former CEO Arrow, etc.

Kara Carter – Sanofi, Evotec

Dale Kempf – AbbVie

Marnix van Loock – Janssen

I thought if this list was satisfactory, we could try to bring these folks together just to tap their knowledge and networks to see what else might be out there.

As you know, Gates Foundation themselves are trying to put some molecules from Calibr in the fight, but they are open to looking robustly at other molecules that are out there. They are major advocates of the UK Challenge Programme and Trevor Mundel has been in touch to ask if they could drop some of their molecules