

Microeos' chief medical officer talks to EPM about antibiotic alternatives

by Johan Frieling, Emily Hughes

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Johan Frieling has recently been appointed as the new chief medical officer of Microeos. EPM talks to him about his experience in the pharmaceutical sector and the company's new antibiotic alternative, Staphefekt



Johan Frieling, chief medical officer, Microeos

EPM: How did you enter the pharmaceutical sector?

JF: After finishing medical school, I started to work as a Research Fellow at the university hospital in Nijmegen. I was co-investigator for an industry sponsored clinical trial of an anti-TNF antibody in sepsis.

That was my first encounter with research organised by the pharmaceutical industry. During my time at medical school the curriculum lacked any information on how drug development was structured. I got caught-up by the scientific level and vibrancy of the research and decided after three years to make the step to industry. A step I never regretted!

EPM: What motivates you to work?

JF: To be at the junction where science, medicine, business and most of all patients' needs meet.

As a physician, the benefit for the patient is the most important goal and being able to work on innovative ways to meet their needs gets me up in the morning.

I had the privilege to contribute to the registration of the first transgenic drug, opening the door for others to use this novel production method to contribute to patient care.

However my current motivator, mostly because of its global importance, is working on alternative ways to treat bacterial infections.

EPM: What are your hopes for Staphefekt?

JF: My belief is that Staphefekt will change how we will treat chronic diseases that are associated with bacterial colonisation, like atopic dermatitis and folliculitis, or superficial skin infections.

Staphefekt has the potential to intervene at the early stages of bacterial colonisation, before *S. aureus* can cause serious infections further down the continuum.

Being able to use an anti-bacterial drug as a maintenance therapy, without any significant side-effects will be a game changer in dermatology.

My longer term vision is to advance Microeos' endolysin technology to treat other, more systemic infections, which are resistant to current antibiotics.

EPM: What is your vision for the future of health?

JF: It may sound like a Miss Universe response, but affordable, effective and safe healthcare for everyone is what we should strive for.

It is well known that pharmaceutical therapy has enormously contributed to the improvement of human health. Keeping this sustainable and affordable requires a lot of effort as pharma's successes have led to a shift in focus to new types of diseases and threats, like antimicrobial resistance, which present costly challenges.

EPM: How do you think your new position as chief medical officer will help you to achieve this?

JF: At Microeos we work on tackling the antimicrobial challenges, trying to prevent antimicrobial resistance from sending us back to the dark ages, where the infectious complications of simple surgical procedures and chemotherapy can become lethal again.

My goal is to guide our endolysin technology through the clinical development process and the subsequent regulatory and reimbursement stages for as many indications as possible, starting with skin diseases.

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