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RAPID POINT-OF-CARE BREATH TEST FOR PULMONARY TUBERCULOSIS

Contact: Dr. Michael Phillips

Menssana Research, Inc., 211 Warren St, Newark, NJ 07103, USA

Phone 973 643 5464

Email: mphillips@menssanaresearch.com

Website: www.menssanaresearch.com

Newark, NJ: A rapid point-of-care breath test accurately detected active pulmonary tuberculosis, according to a report published in the journal "*Tuberculosis*."

Menssana Research developed the breath test in Newark, NJ and was funded by the National Institutes of Health and the US Air Force. Researchers at four medical centers in India, the Philippines, and England studied 279 patients with Menssana's BreathLink system that collected, concentrated, and analyzed breath with a highly sensitive gas chromatograph. A patient breathed gently into a tube for two minutes and the analysis was completed in six minutes. Results were then uploaded to Menssana's laboratory in near real-time through the internet.

"The breath test was 84% accurate in detecting patients with active pulmonary tuberculosis," said Dr. Michael Phillips, developer of the breath test and CEO of Menssana Research, Inc. "It detected volatile organic compounds that are

manufactured by the infecting organism, Mycobacterium tuberculosis, which causes the disease.” He added that patients generally prefer breath tests to x-rays or blood or sputum tests because they are quick, painless and safe, as well as much less expensive.

Pulmonary tuberculosis is a leading cause of death from infectious disease in developing countries. Almost one third of the world's population is infected, and approximately 9.4 million new cases of pulmonary tuberculosis are diagnosed annually worldwide. The breath test is not intended to replace sputum tests that are now widely used but could be used as a first-line screening test to dramatically reduce the cost of finding each new case of active pulmonary tuberculosis in a high-risk community. The healthy majority of the population would have a negative test result, and only those with a positive breath test would need a confirmatory sputum test, which costs more and takes longer. Patients could learn their breath test results in less than ten minutes.

Dr. Phillips hopes physicians and patients will eventually think of breath testing in the same way that we regard a chest x-ray or a blood test: as an inexpensive and convenient screening test to detect several diseases in their earliest and most treatable stages. Menssana Research is currently developing rapid point-of-care breath tests with BreathLink for other diseases including lung cancer and breast cancer. The Food & Drug Administration awarded the company a Humanitarian Device Exemption for their Heartsbreath test for heart transplant rejection.

A copy of the article can be found online at:
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1472979212000790>