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IISc scientists use asthma drug for treating TB

25 June 2018 | News

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A team of scientists at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) has found out that a drug (Pranlukast) currently used for treating asthma is more effective against tuberculosis (TB). Studies carried out in mice models found the drug to be effective in treating TB both when used alone and in combination with an anti-TB drug rifampicin.

According to the scientists, the drug uses a unique strategy to target the TB bacteria and is therefore quite unlikely to cause any adverse side-effects either to the human cells or the beneficial bacteria found in humans.

The team plans to test the drug on guinea pigs in a few months' time. The efficacy will be tested by using it alone and in combination with rifampicin. If encouraging results are obtained from guinea pig studies, the team intends to straight away conduct Phase II trials in humans, as the safety of the drug is already proven.