



Global Nexus School for Pandemic Prevention & Response

Biotech company collaborates with McMaster team researching drug-resistant infections

By Beth Gallagher
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A Canadian biotech company is moving its head office to Hamilton to accelerate work with McMaster's [Global Nexus School for Pandemic Prevention & Response](#).

Viotika Life Sciences is collaborating with a research team, led by Global Nexus Executive Director Gerry Wright, to find new solutions to the crisis of drug-resistant infections, which [kill more than one million people every year](#).

"McMaster's Global Nexus is a hub for the world's top researchers in antimicrobial resistance," said Căhuck LaFlèche, Viotika's CEO. "We are centralizing our operations in Hamilton where important research equipment and exceptional people are already in place."

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a growing crisis globally because antibiotics and other medicines used to treat some infectious diseases are no longer effective. New drug discoveries have not kept up with bacteria that have evolved due to the overuse of antibiotics and other medicines. A [2016 review on antimicrobial resistance](#) estimates that by 2050, as many as ten million people could die each year as a result of AMR.

"Industry has been slow to come to the table in the battle against AMR," said Wright. "Viotika is changing that story through this collaboration. Viotika will help move us closer to finding solutions to the rapidly evolving AMR crisis with its diverse portfolio, investments and keen interest in accelerating AMR research."

A global leader in infectious disease research, Wright said AMR threatens the foundation of modern medicine.

"People undergoing cancer treatment or surgery are often prescribed antibiotics," he said. "Without reliable antibiotics and antifungals, people undergoing these lifesaving treatments risk dying of infections."

Global Nexus is an innovation hub where scholars, scientists, and business and community leaders work in a holistic way to address the social, political, and economic realities of infectious diseases. Global Nexus researchers are also part of a Viotika-led consortium that includes German-based Evotec and X-Biotix Therapeutics, based in San Diego, California.

LaFlèche said McMaster University is the only place in Canada that has the screening equipment necessary to work on the solutions that Viotika, which plans to open its Hamilton head office in fall 2023, is hoping to help advance.

"We are focused on discovering and validating new drug pathways that kill bacteria through a new mechanism that shows a low risk of becoming resistant," said LaFlèche. "It's difficult and expensive work, but I think we learned through COVID-19 that when academics, businesses, non-profits, and governments work together, we can advance effective solutions to health challenges with speed and rigour."