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HOME SCIENCE KITS ENABLE ANYONE TO HELP FIND NEW ANTIBIOTIC TREATMENTS

 SPORT & FITNESS

The ILIAD Project is employing citizens to help out in the field of antibacterial research by using pre-packed kits to perform their own trials at home.

This is part of a new series of articles that looks at entrepreneurs hoping to get their ideas off the ground through crowdfunding. At the time of writing, each of these innovations is currently seeking funding.

Most people have been prescribed antibiotics at some point in their life, and the drugs currently do a good job of helping to fight infections and even save lives. However, bacteria are evolving to become immune to these medicines, which has given rise to the hospital ‘superbugs’ such as MRSA in recent years. The [ILIAD Project](#) is recognizing the need for greater research into this area, and is employing citizens to help out by using pre-packed kits to perform their own trials at home.

Currently crowdfunding on Indiegogo, the concept is the brainchild of Dr Josiah Zayner, a biophysics expert and NASA Synthetic Biology Fellow, and Mark Opal, a neurobiologist specializing in drug development. The kits involve three steps that can be performed by anyone. Firstly, citizen scientists collect a piece of organic material — this can be anything, such as a leaf found on the ground, although the kits offer suggestions of what might work well. Using the provided pestle and mortar, the sample is then ground up and placed onto an agar plate along with the included control sample. If the user’s sample is no good, bacteria will then grow around it. If it has antibacterial properties, a clear ring will form around it. In either case, citizens can upload the details of their experiment onto the ILIAD database.

The video below offers more information about the project:

Much like [ClicktoCure](#) — the online game that involved the crowds in cancer research — the ILIAD Project could speed up the research needed to start saving lives. A basic testing kit costs USD 42. Are there other ways to get everyone involved in scientific research — not just scientists?

Indiegogo: www.igg.me/at/antibiotics

Spotted by Murray Orange, written by Springwise

20th December 2013

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