

**Recruitment for the Poznań Doctoral School of the Institutes of the Polish Academy of Sciences
at the Institute of Bioorganic Chemistry, PAS in Poznań
Procedure no. 42/2021/ICHB/PSD**

INSTITUTION: Institute of Bioorganic Chemistry, PAS
CITY: Poznań
POSITION: PhD student
POSITIONS AVAILABLE: 1
SCIENTIFIC DISCIPLINE: biological sciences / chemical sciences and related
PUBLICATION DATE: 17.12.2021
APPLICATION DEADLINE: 21.01.2022
IBCH PAS WEBSITE: <https://portal.ibch.poznan.pl/homepage/>
PDS IPAS WEBSITE: http://www.psd-ipan.ibch.poznan.pl/?page_id=355&lang=en

KEY WORDS: SARS-CoV-2, COVID-19, influenza virus, RNA, RNA structure, replication inhibitors, peptide nucleic acids (PNA), triplexes, small molecules, high throughput screening, HTS.

Research topic: Antiviral strategies targeting RNA: Triplex forming peptide nucleic acids (PNA) and their small molecule conjugates specific to conserved RNA motifs in Influenza A and SARS-CoV-2.

Principal Investigator: prof. dr hab. Elżbieta Kierzek

I. Project description

Two respiratory viruses are subjects of the research project: influenza A virus (IAV) and SARS-CoV-2. SARS-CoV-2 caused the global COVID-19 pandemic and, despite vaccines, still poses a serious threat to human health and life due to the lack of effective drugs. Influenza A virus is also dangerous with pandemic potential, taking its death toll each year.

Both viruses are RNA viruses. Despite the differences in the viral cycle of the two viruses, their replication is fully RNA dependent at all stages. In addition, many studies, including those carried out in the project leader laboratory, proved that the RNA structure of IAV and SARS-CoV-2 contains numerous conserved motifs and is crucial in the replication of both viruses. Appropriately designed therapeutic tools targeting these motifs should inhibit viral replication, regardless of variant and strain.

The overall goal of the project is biological, chemical and biophysical research to use for the first time modified peptide nucleic acids (PNAs) to disrupt viral RNA function and inhibit viral replication. PNAs will form stable triplex (triple-stranded) structures with selected influenza A and SARS-CoV-2 RNA motifs. We also plan to conduct high throughput screening (HTS) and virtual high throughput screening (vHTS) aimed at finding small molecules (ligands) selectively binding to chosen RNA structural motifs of both viruses. Both of these groups of studies will determine the optimal PNA and ligand that bind to the same viral RNA structural motif and develop highly specific PNA-ligand conjugates with improved binding properties and increased antiviral activity. The research includes the determination of the effect of PNA and their conjugates on the replication of viruses at the BSL2 safety level (cell line and mouse model studies).

Additional information:

1. Research and doctoral theses shall be carried out within the project Opus 21 (2021/41/B/NZ1/03819), entitled "Antiviral strategies targeting RNA: Triplex forming peptide nucleic acids (PNA) and their small molecule conjugates specific to conserved RNA motifs in Influenza A and SARS-CoV-2", funded by National Science Centre, Poland.
2. PhD students shall receive a stipend in the gross amount of ca. 4300 PLN (3800 PLN net), for the period of 48 months with the possibility of further employment.

3. PhD students shall be subject to social insurance, pursuant to article. 6 section 1 passage 7b of the act of October 13th, 1998 on the social insurance system (Journal of Laws of 2019, item 300, 303 and 730).

II. Requirements for the candidates:

1. MSc degree in biological sciences (biology, molecular biology, biotechnology) or chemical sciences or related sciences or fulfilling the conditions stipulated in article 186, section 2 of the act of July 20th, 2018 Law on Higher Education and Science (Journal of Laws of 2018, item 1668, as amended); BSc degree holders can also apply but will need to obtain their MSc title before they start working in the project.
2. Knowledge of molecular biology or bioorganic chemistry or virology techniques. Additional advantage will be experience in work with biomolecules, for example: in research with nucleic acids and their complexes, participation in structural research of biomolecules or using cell lines.
3. Very good command of English.
4. Basic knowledge in the topics related with project.
5. Very high motivation for further development and ability to work in a team.

III. Duties in project:

1. Selection of small molecules using high-throughput screening (HTS) - method optimization, participation in screening.
2. Studies of RNA/PNA complexes.
3. Investigation of inhibitory properties of PNA and their conjugates against replication of influenza virus and SARS-CoV-2 in cells.
4. Studies on the mechanism of inhibition of influenza virus replication by selected PNA-ligand conjugates.

IV. Required documents:

1. Application for admission to PDS IPAS along with the consent for processing personal data upon the recruitment procedure and a statement on having acknowledged the regulations of recruitment for PDS IPAS, using http://www.psd-ipan.ibch.poznan.pl/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/ICHBApplication_for_admission_202110.docx
2. Certified copy of the diploma confirming graduation or a certificate confirming graduation (in the case of diplomas issued by foreign higher education schools, diploma stipulated in article 326, section 2, passage 2 or article 327, passage 2 of the act of July 20th, 2018 – Law on Higher Education and Science (Journal of Laws of 2018, item 1668, as amended), entitling to apply for conferment of a doctoral degree in the state in where such a certificate was issued by the relevant higher education school. In the event when the candidate is not in possession of the aforementioned documents, he/she is obliged to submit them prior to admission to PDS IPAS. Additional information on foreign school diplomas are available at: <https://nawa.gov.pl/en/recognition/recognition-for-academic-purposes/applying-for-admission-to-doctoral-studies>
3. Scientific CV encompassing track record of previous education and employment, information on involvement in scientific activities (participation in student research groups, attendance at scientific conferences, accomplished internships and training, awarded prizes and distinction) and list of publications.
4. Cover letter featuring a short description of research interests, achievements and justification for the intention to commence education at the doctoral school.
5. Certificates or other documents confirming the degree of proficiency in English, if the candidate is in possession of such materials.
6. Contact details of at least one, previous scientific supervisor or another researcher who is entitled to issue an opinion on the candidate.

V. Applications should be submitted via the eRecruiter portal at

<https://system.erecruiter.pl/FormTemplates/RecruitmentForm.aspx?WebID=aa25abcf53ef4bfc88227b0a08083f1a>

VI. Submission deadline is 21 January 2022.

VII. Criteria for evaluation of candidates:

1. Candidate's research achievements, pursuant to the grades obtained in the course of studies, scientific publications, awarded scholarships and distinctions resulting from conducting scientific research or student activities or other achievements.
2. Candidate's scientific and professional experience, pursuant to participation in conferences, workshops, training sessions and internships, implementation of research and commercial projects, involvement in scientific trusts and societies, international and professional mobility, experience in other sectors, including industry.
3. Candidate's knowledge on the following discipline: biological sciences or chemical sciences.
4. Knowledge of the subject matter described in the recruitment advertisement.

VIII. The recruitment procedure shall be concluded no later than 18 February 2022.

IX. The description of the recruitment process is stipulated in the Regulations of Recruitment for PDS IPAS. Following the recruitment procedure, the unadmitted candidates shall be informed on the number of points obtained at both stages.

Incomplete applications will not be considered.

For additional information please contact the Principal Investigator:

Prof. Elzbieta Kierzek, Department of RNA Structural Genomics

e-mail: elzbieta.kierzek@ibch.poznan.pl

Information clause:

Pursuant to the stipulations of the regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation), further referred to as GDPR, we hereby inform that:

- *The Institute of Bioorganic Chemistry, Polish Academy of Sciences, seated in Noskowskiego St. 12/14, 61-704 Poznan; REGON 000849327, NIP 777-00-02-062 is the administrator of the collected personal data (further referred to as the Institute).*
- *The Administrator appointed a Data Protection Officer, who can be contacted in writing, via traditional mail, by sending a letter to the following address: Z. Noskowskiego St. 12/14, 61-704 Poznan, or by sending an e-mail to: dpo@ibch.poznan.pl.*
- *The personal data of the candidates is processed for the purposes of fulfilling the tasks of the administrator, associated with conducting the recruitment procedure for a vacant position.*
- *The legal basis for processing personal data is the Act of 26 June 1974 – The Labor Code, Act of 30 April 2010 on the Polish Academy of Sciences or the consent of the person whose data shall be subjected to processing.*
- *Your personal data shall be subjected to processing for period of 3 months upon the date of decision of the recruitment committee. Following this period, the data will be irretrievably and effectively destroyed.*
- *The personal data of the candidates shall not be transferred to any third country.*
- *The person whose data shall be subjected to processing has the right to:*
 - *request access to his/her personal data, and to amend it or delete it, pursuant to articles 15-17 of GDPR;*
 - *limit data processing, in the events stipulated in article 18 of GDPR;*
 - *data transferring, pursuant to article 20 of GDPR;*

- *withdraw consent at any moment, without influencing compliance with the law of the processing that was executed prior to consent withdrawal;*
- *file a complaint to the Inspector General for Personal Data Protection.*

Providing personal data in the scope stipulated in article 22 (1) of the Act of 26 June 1974 – The Labor Code is mandatory, whereas providing data in a broader scope is voluntary and requires consent for its processing.