How long can you hold out against the Superbugs? New mobile game takes on threat of global antibiotic resistance

Submitted by: Nesta
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A new game (https://longitudeprize.org/superbugs) released today, Superbugs sees players face off against a major threat to global health. Launched by the Longitude Prize (https://longitudeprize.org/) - a five year, £10 million challenge to tackle the issue of antibiotic resistance - Superbugs challenges players to destroy mutant bacteria until new antibiotics can be discovered to replenish humanity's precious and dwindling supplies.

Developed by BAFTA-winning applied games studio, Preloaded (http://preloaded.com/), Superbugs is a unique game with a purpose as players have to survive against drug-resistant bacteria. Available for mobile today through the App Store and Google Play.

With its petri dish filled with colourful bacterial colonies, the game comes straight from today's headlines: the global rise of superbugs, antibiotic resistant bacteria which can't be killed by the drugs we rely on to fight the infections they cause. It's estimated that by 2050 bacteria like these could kill up to 10 million people every year, according to a recent expert report (http://amr-review.org/sites/default/files/160525_Final%20paper_with%20cover.pdf).

To address this threat, The Longitude Prize is focused on the creation of an innovative diagnostic test which can reduce the unnecessary use of antibiotics, helping slow down resistance and preserve them. Launched in 2014, the Challenge it is open to entries from innovators around the world and runs until 2019, although a winning solution for the multi million-pound Prize could be found before then.

Tamar Ghosh, spokesperson for the Longitude Prize said: "We know that our daily behaviours - like sharing and overusing antibiotics - can lead to bacteria becoming drug-resistant, so it's really important that we increase awareness around this huge issue. It's especially important to reach young people and games like this are a fantastic way of doing just that."

The award-winning* Superbugs lets new audiences explore and understand the scientific concepts at the heart of one of the biggest threats humanity faces through self-directed experiences of active and engaging play. The game is designed by the studio behind the hit Science Museum mobile game 'Rugged Rovers', Preloaded creates games which empower, educate and transform behaviour.

"Superbugs takes the complex science behind the spread of antibiotic resistance in bacteria and models it as a casual mobile game that's not only great fun to play but scientifically sound," said Phil Stuart, Creative Director of Preloaded. "Games are the perfect medium to reach millions of people and make complex ideas understandable."

The game is available for download at longitudeprize.org/superbugs (https://longitudeprize.org/superbugs)

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Notes to editors:

*For its capacity to engage with young people on a major issue, Superbugs was recognised in the Silver category at the Serious Play Awards (http://seriousplayconf.com/2016/06/20/winners-named-in-2016-international-serious-play-awards/).

Images and video of the game can be found here (https://longitudeprize.org/06072016).

For further information or interviews on Superbugs and the Longitude Prize contact Matthew Hull at the Nesta press office on 020 7438 2514 or matthew.hull@nesta.org.uk, or media@nesta.org.uk.

Live presentation of gameplay from Superbugs will feature as part of a Science Museum Lates event based around gaming on 27 July 2016.

About the Longitude Prize:
The £10m Longitude Prize is the UK's biggest science prize. It aims to conserve antibiotics for future generations and revolutionise global healthcare. It will reward a competitor that can develop a transformative, point-of-care diagnostic test that will significantly reduce the overuse or misuse of antibiotics. The Longitude Prize being delivered by Nesta was announced by the Prime Minister at G8 in 2013, and, through the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, is being supported by Innovate UK as funding partner. Watch the Longitude Prize video (https://vimeo.com/163519071) to learn more.

About Preloaded:
Preloaded is a BAFTA winning applied games studio making ‘games with purpose’. Since 2000 Preloaded has worked with broadcasters, museums, brands, government organisations, charities and NGOs to use the transformational power of games to solve problems and change lives.For more information on Preloaded, please visit www.preloaded.com (http://www.preloaded.com/), and on Twitter (https://twitter.com/preloaded).

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