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Pharmacy Students Helping Cincinnati Firm Fight Bugs Through Research

CEDARVILLE, OHIO -- Product claims on insect repellents are some of the best-read items on spray cans. And, over-the-counter pharmaceutical companies continually research their products to provide data that supports their product claims.

To help Cincinnati, Ohio-based Medella Laboratories with its Medella Naturals™ over-the-counter, all-natural insect repellent, Cedarville University's School of Pharmacy is analyzing the effectiveness of its contents.

Medella Naturals' insect repellent has been sold nationwide, including at Kroger's stores, since 2016. Sales have been steady, and Medella hopes Cedarville's research will help strengthen product repellency claims, leading to an increase in brand popularity.

Leading the research from Cedarville are Dr. Rocco Rotello, associate professor of pharmaceutical sciences, and Dr. Michael Mendel, professor of biology and an entomology specialist. Rotello and Mendel are using an insect control station in Panay Island, Philippines, and the University of Georgia in Athens, Georgia, for their test locations.

The insect control station is testing the length of time between product application and the first insect bite. It is conducting the tests by using human subjects and the southern house mosquito, which can be found in both tropical locations and the southern United States.

The University of Georgia is testing the strength of the insect repellent by observing its effects on biting black flies, which can be found throughout the United States, Mexico and Greenland.

The results of the repellency testing are expected to be delivered to Cedarville University and Medella this spring. Together, Cedarville and Medella will analyze the results and discuss the product.

"This collaboration with Cedarville will enhance Medella's product pipeline and the clinical development of future products," noted Michael Ewers, president and CEO of Medella Laboratories.

Rotello believes Cedarville's pharmacy faculty and students will be given additional research opportunities with Medella once this research has been completed.

"There is the potential to innovate around some of Medella's newer compounds," explained Rotello. "If those compounds are effective, it could lead to a new discovery and co-developed product."

Dr. Marc Sweeney, dean of the school of pharmacy, is hopeful for more opportunities for Cedarville students.

“I believe this collaboration will afford faculty and students opportunities to engage in meaningful research that will contribute to their overall skills and will create research career opportunities for our students,” said Sweeney.

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,193 undergraduate, graduate and online students in more than 150 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings and leading student satisfaction ratings. For more information about the University, visit www.cedarville.edu.