THE GLOBAL FIGHT BEGINS HERE.

We are the Virus Hunters.

Who are the Virus Hunters? It’s a fun way to describe a serious job. These are our scientists who work to identify, catalog, track and test mutating strains of HIV, hepatitis viruses, and other bugs.

For Mary Rodgers, an Abbott senior scientist who spends her work life hunting viruses as part of the company’s diagnostics business, it’s her calling to do her part to keep the world’s blood supply safe.

She does that as a member of Abbott’s Global Surveillance Program, built on a one-of-a-kind collection of HIV and hepatitis virus strains from around the world. It includes more than 60,000 samples collected over 20 years from 40 countries on six continents. If a new strain is discovered, our scientists make sure that our blood screening and diagnostic tests can detect it. And this is important, considering that Abbott tests are used to screen more than half of the world's blood supply.

That program in turn helps further the capabilities of many of Abbott’s diagnostics tools. Because if a virus can’t be found in testing, it can't be treated. That's how outbreaks happen.

"It's not easy to tackle new viral threats as they occur in real-time," said John R. Hackett, Jr., Ph.D., divisional vice president, Applied Research and Technology, for Abbott's diagnostics business. "With diagnostics and ongoing vigilance, we're getting better at rapidly identifying the cause of these outbreaks, which could lead to quicker response and better treatment."

The battle is constant. Viruses are always evolving. It's their fight for survival as much as humanity's.

"We need to stay on top of current epidemics like HIV, HCV, HBV. And part of what’s involved in that is understanding (genetic) sequences, because as these viruses evolve, the means of detecting them has to keep pace," said Michael Berg, an Abbott senior scientist who works on the new virus discovery program and with Rodgers and Hackett on the global surveillance program.

Abbott's Diagnostic portfolio is a leader in the industry, in part because of the range of accurate tests our devices have the capability to execute. Our instruments and tests screen more of the world's blood than any other company.

Because, as Hackett rightly points out, "How far do we go to ensure that there is a safe blood supply? I'm always sitting there thinking, 'You never know. You never know who's going to need it.'"

We're doing our part to accurately, precisely track and test for these deadly viruses, to speed treatment development and patient care.

The global fight starts here. We are The Virus Hunters.

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