

## How one patient inspired the creation of a new superbug therapy

Mackenzie Bean ([Twitter](#)) - Thursday, January 23rd, 2020



A 25-year-old patient who died of a resistant bacterial infection in 2017 is now the namesake of a novel bacteriophage used to fight the superbug, reports [STAT](#).

Mallory Smith was born with cystic fibrosis and [underwent](#) a double lung transplant at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center in September 2017. After the procedure, she developed a rare infection caused by *Burkholderia cepacia* bacteria that did not respond to any antibiotics. As a last resort, Ms. Smith's physicians put out a call to researchers for a bacteriophage to attack the *B. cepacia* bacteria in her lungs.

Ms. Smith died in November 2017 before the experimental treatment could be developed. However, samples of her bacterial infection were passed on to microbiologists at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. These researchers successfully developed a bacteriophage that kills the strain of *B. cepacia* responsible for Ms. Smith's fatal infection.

Picking out a name for the phage was easy. Microbiologists dubbed the treatment BCMallory1, in honor of the patient who helped spur its development.

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