

Biobot Analytics, a Startup Using Sewage to Fight the Opioid Crisis, Raises \$2.5M

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Biobot Analytics, a startup spun out of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology that is collecting data from sewage to monitor opioid use, has raised its first round of seed funding.

The company pulled in \$2.5 million, with the Chicago venture firm [Ekistic Ventures](#) acting as the leader. Also participating were Y Combinator, Refactor Capital, Liquid 2 Ventures and several other investment firms.

The influx of cash comes as Biobot Analytics searches for some of its earliest clients. It has already conducted pilot programs in Boston, Kuwait and South Korea, and it recently started a project in Cary, N.C., but it has also launched an open competition among cities to find five partners to work with in 2018.

The company works by sending robotic collection systems into sewers to get samples, which the company can then analyze in order to get measurements of opioid use. The process is inherently anonymous, since it taps into shared sewers, and it can deliver the government information about how consumption of the drugs has changed over time.

It's a largely untapped data source for fighting the opioid addiction and overdose crisis.

Biobot Analytics is fresh off [winning a pitch competition](#) at this year's South by Southwest, and the Bloomberg Mayors Challenge also [recognized Cary](#) for its work with Biobot.

Opioid analytics is just the first use case the company is tackling — sewage can be used for a lot more.

“We believe our data can be the new standard by which to evaluate the opioid epidemic across all cities, counties and states,” said Mariana Matus, CEO and co-founder of the company, in a press release. “But what’s more exciting it so imagine all the other types of public health data we can produce from sewage, such as levels of antibiotic resistance or exposure to environmental contaminants. These insights will provide the first proactive dashboard to address the public health crises that affect all communities, and do so in a way that protects individual privacy and avoids bias based on financial, race, ethnic or other characteristics.”

<http://www.govtech.com/biz/Biobot-Analytics-a-Startup-Using-Sewage-to-Fight-the-Opioid-Crisis-Raises-25M.html>