

Press Release

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TB vaccine research: New network connects European and African institutions

European and African research organisations are gearing up to improve and strengthen collaboration in tuberculosis (TB) vaccine research. Over ten institutions from both continents will create a network where knowledge on clinical trials will be exchanged, joint activities can be explored and coordinated, and where clinical trials capacity will be improved. The network has received a budget of 765,000 euros.

The network is funded by the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) and will be coordinated by the Max Planck Institute for Infection Biology in Germany and TuBerculosis Vaccine Initiative (TBVI) from the Netherlands. The programme 'Collaboration and integration of tuberculosis vaccine trials in Europe and Africa' (TBTEA) will bring together researchers to strengthen collaboration between the north and the south and to exchange knowledge and know-how. African post-doc researchers will be trained in collaboration with European institutions that, in turn, will benefit from the experiences gained in endemic countries. This will contribute to an improved and sustainable research infrastructure in African countries where TB is a public health threat and prevent overlap and unnecessary duplication of work. European partners can learn how to make more efficient use of existing trial sites whereas African partners will benefit from the translation of European knowledge. From a scientific point of view, the network will support current and novel assays to evaluate the immune response to vaccination in a clinical setting. The network will aid the development of improved and harmonized assays, well-defined correlates of protection and valid biomarkers or surrogate markers to assist and accelerate the clinical evaluation of TB vaccine candidates.

TB, often thought to be a disease of the past, is diagnosed in up to ten million individuals per year. Every year nearly 2 million people die. BCG, the only currently available vaccine, conveys very limited protection. The disease causes great human suffering and serious financial burden and hampers economic growth. New vaccines form a crucial part of the fight to eliminate the disease. In the past 10 years a network of European institutions has developed a portfolio of novel vaccine candidates against TB. A number of candidates are now under evaluation in clinical trials in Africa as well as in Europe.

The project joins the following institutions:

- Max Planck Society for the Advancement of Science, Max Planck Institute for Infection Biology, Germany
- TuBerculosis Vaccine Initiative (TBVI), The Netherlands
- University of Oxford, UK
- Statens Serum Institute, Denmark
- University of Zaragoza, Spain
- INSERM, Institut Pasteur de Lille, France
- South African Tuberculosis Vaccine Initiative (SATVI), University of Cape Town, South Africa
- Stellenbosch University, South Africa
- The Infectious Diseases Institute (IDI) at Makerere University, Uganda
- Armauer Hansen Research Institute (AHRI), Ethiopia
- Espoir Pour La Santé (EPLS), Senegal
- Hospitalier CHU Le Dantec, Senegal
- Vakzine Projekt Management (VPM), Germany



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