

Combination of two AIDS vaccines to be tested clinically

New Delhi: The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has decided to initiate Phase I clinical trial to test a combination of two AIDS vaccine candidates, ADVAX and TBC-M4, in a 'prime-boost' regimen to prevent the dreaded disease.

'Prime-boost' is a way of combining two different vaccine candidates with the hope of getting a better response from the body's immune system than giving either vaccine candidate alone.

ADVAX, a plasmid DNA AIDS vaccine candidate, will be used for priming the immune response. TBC-M4, an AIDS vaccine candidate based on a vector built from recombinant Modified Vaccinia Ankara (MVA), will be used to boost the initial immune response generated by ADVAX.

The trial will be conducted at the National AIDS Research Institute (NARI) in Pune, and the Tuberculosis Research Centre (TRC) in Chennai.

It will be under the aegis of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Union Government through the ICMR and the National AIDS Control Organisation and the not-for-profit International AIDS Vac-

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■ "We must get treatments to those infected and find better ways of preventing people from becoming infected in the first place," said Seth Berkley, IAVI President

cine Initiative (IAVI).

V M Katoch, Secretary, Department of Health Research and the Director-General of the ICMR, said, "The ICMR is committed to give the best available tools to control HIV/AIDS. Our partnership with IAVI is helping us in bringing new vaccines but also in capacity development and infrastructure strengthening."

The decision to initiate the trial follows promising results of the Phase I trial of the TBC-M4 vaccine candidate recently announced by ICMR, NACO and IAVI.

In collaboration with London's Imperial College, IAVI recently initiated the trial in London to test the prime-boost combination of ADVAX and TBC-M4. *1/08*