

Zydus Group to donate USD 240,000 to The National Institutes of Health, USA for advancing leishmaniasis research

Ahmedabad, India, April 23, 2015

Etna Biotech, the Vaccine R & D subsidiary of Zydus, announced a collaborative program with the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, part of the U.S. National Institutes of Health- for advancing leishmaniasis research. Under a separate gift agreement, Etna Biotech also extended its support of the NIH leishmaniasis program by donating \$240,000 for research. The program's goal is to collaborate between NIAID's Vector Molecular Biology Section and Etna Biotech, the Vaccine Research Center of Zydus in Italy, to investigate the importance of vector salivary proteins in a future leishmaniasis vaccine, and testing in natural models of parasite transmission a combination of Leishmania antigens with a sand fly salivary protein to develop a novel candidate vaccine against visceral leishmaniasis (VL).

Known as Kala-Azar in India, VL is transmitted by the bite of an infected sand fly. There are over 500,000 new VL cases and 50,000 associated deaths each year. VL is the most severe form of leishmaniasis, affecting vital organs, and, if left untreated, the disease can be fatal. A vaccine is considered essential to control and eliminate the disease. Currently, leishmaniasis occurs in four continents and is considered to be endemic in 88 countries; 72 of those are developing countries, with the disease being most common in India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sudan and Brazil. While there are drugs to treat the disease, they are expensive and often toxic. To date, a safe and efficacious vaccine to prevent this disease in humans does not exist.

Speaking of the development, Mr. Pankaj R. Patel, Chairman and Managing Director, Zydus Group, said "Zydus is proud to collaborate with US NIH to solve the increasing worldwide disease burden of visceral leishmaniasis and to move forward to put a basis for the successful development of a novel candidate vaccine for visceral leishmaniasis."

NIAID's Vector Molecular Biology Section is headed by Dr. Jesus G. Valenzuela. Work undertaken in the lab is focused on better understanding of molecular aspects of vector salivary proteins with the goal of using this information to accelerate efforts to develop a safe and efficacious leishmaniasis vaccine.

Zydus Vaccine division has indigenously developed, manufactured and launched India's first vaccine against H1N1 (Vaxiflu-S). The Vaccine Division's Rabies Vaccine Manufacturing facility has received WHO pre-qualification, and is one of the largest Rabies manufacturing facilities in India. The current programs under development include vaccine candidates designed to address infectious diseases like next-generation Influenza, Measles-Mumps-Rubella-Varicella, Typhoid, DPT-HiB, Hepatitis-B, Hepatitis-A, Hepatitis-E, Japanese Encephalitis, HPV and combination vaccines. Research is also focused on developing a Malaria vaccine.

About Zydus

Headquartered in Ahmedabad, India, Zydus Cadila is an innovative, global pharmaceutical company that discovers, manufactures and markets a broad range of healthcare therapies. The group employs over 16,500 people worldwide including over 1200 scientists engaged in R & D and is dedicated to creating healthier communities globally. As a leading healthcare provider, it aims to become a global research based pharmaceutical company by 2020. The group has a strong research pipeline of NCEs, biologics and vaccines that are in various stages, including late stages, of clinical trials.