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Zydus to develop vaccine against COVID-19

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Initiates an accelerated research programme with multiple teams in India and Europe

Zydus Cadila, an innovation-driven, global pharmaceutical company, announced that it has initiated an accelerated research programme with multiple teams in India and Europe developing a vaccine for the novel coronavirus, 2019-nCoV (COVID-19) based on two approaches.

The first approach deals with the development of a DNA vaccine against the major viral membrane protein responsible for the cell entry of the novel coronavirus, now called COVID19. The second approach deals with the development of a live attenuated recombinant measles virus vectored vaccine against COVID-19.

Speaking on the development, Chairman of the Zydus Group, Mr. Pankaj R. Patel said, “There is an urgent and pressing need to develop a safe and efficacious vaccine that can prevent the spread of this deadly virus. Our researchers are working to bring a speedy solution to this most devastating outbreak in recent times.” The group’s Vaccine Technology Centre in India which is working on the plasmid DNA vaccine also has wide ranging capabilities in developing and manufacturing different vaccines for unmet needs. The group was the first to develop and indigenously manufacture the vaccine to combat Swine Flu during outbreak in 2010.

The group’s research arm in Europe, Etna Biotech is working on measles reverse genetics technology which has been used earlier to successfully develop the SARS-vaccine. The vaccines developed through this platform are safe, efficacious and large doses can be manufactured for which Zydus already has production facilities in place. The company’s robust manufacturing facilities for producing recombinant antigens and measles containing vaccines would enable rapid ramping up of the production for both vaccine candidates, once the proof-of-concept is established.