

Hilleman Laboratories receives Indo-Swedish grant for developing - Oral Cholera Vaccine

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Hilleman Laboratories, a joint-venture partnership between MSD and Wellcome Trust, received a 6 million krona (737281.80 US Dollar) Indo – Swedish grant for the project 'Improved, affordable single strain whole cell-B subunit oral cholera vaccine'.

The proposed project, carried out by Hilleman Laboratories, is being jointly funded by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Government of India and Vinnova, the Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems.

The project will fuel further Research & Development of the Oral Cholera Vaccine (OCV) with knowledge exchange and transfer of scientists across India and Sweden.

Speaking on the partnership, Dr Davinder Gill, CEO Hilleman Laboratories said, "Cholera remains a threat to global public health and is a barometer of health inequity and lack of social development. Considering the urgent need for effective and affordable Cholera vaccines, both for use in Cholera outbreaks and in mass vaccination campaigns, we would like to accelerate development of our simplified Oral Cholera Vaccine, HILLCHOLTM."

He added, "Our partnership with DBT and Vinnova is a step in a new direction. We are gratified by the grant awarded to us, which will help us develop capabilities through cross-border partnerships. We look forward to the teamwork required to fight a fatal disease like Cholera, and to come up with a safe and affordable vaccine against this disease."

Further, Dr Ajit Pal Singh, Vice President, Clinical R&D, Hilleman Laboratories added, "We are pleased to be appreciated by the Indo-Swedish governments, and the association with DBT and Vinnova to develop the Oral Cholera Vaccine (OCV), which is an important project for Hilleman Labs. The grant will incentivize advancement of Clinical R&D against diseases that

disproportionately affect poor countries. It will allow us to invest in innovation more effectively to explore high-quality vaccines & technologies”.

The OCV developed by Hilleman Labs would make mass vaccination a reality in Cholera endemic zones due to ease of manufacturing and low cost, thereby improving vaccine affordability and accessibility. Cholera continues to be a serious health problem and there is high prevalence of the diseases due to global conflict, natural disasters, poor sanitation and unsafe drinking water. Affordable and low-cost vaccines will help in reducing the burden of disease and contribute to Cholera control efforts.