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IAVI, Merck to develop vaccine against SARS-CoV-2

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New Collaboration to Leverage Complementary Expertise and Capabilities with rVSV Technology to Advance Novel Vaccine Candidate



Merck, known as MSD outside the United States and Canada, and IAVI, a nonprofit scientific research organization dedicated to addressing urgent, unmet global health challenges, announced a new collaboration to develop an investigational vaccine against SARS-CoV-2 to be used for the prevention of COVID-19.

This vaccine candidate will use the recombinant vesicular stomatitis virus (rVSV) technology that is the basis for Merck's Ebola Zaire virus vaccine, ERVEBO® (Ebola Zaire Vaccine, Live), which was the first rVSV vaccine approved for use in humans. Merck has also signed an agreement with the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA), part of the office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response within an agency of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, to provide initial funding support for this effort.

Under the agreement IAVI and Merck will work together to advance the development and global clinical evaluation of a SARS-CoV-2 vaccine candidate designed and engineered by IAVI scientists. The vaccine candidate is in preclinical development, and clinical studies are planned to start later in 2020.

Merck will lead regulatory filings globally. Both organizations will work together to develop the vaccine and make it accessible and affordable globally, if approved.