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Australia leads research to develop next generation of TB vaccines

September 30, 2022 | News

A project to develop the next generation of Tuberculosis vaccines has been awarded an AU$19 million contract by the US National Institute of Health



The University of Sydney and The Centenary Institute, together with collaborators have been awarded an AU$19 million contract from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, part of the US National Institutes of Health (NIH), to develop the next generation of tuberculosis (TB) vaccines.

The NIH contract, Advancing Vaccine Adjuvant Research for TB (AVAR-T) funds five years of research and development of new TB vaccines, to the point that they can then be tested in human clinical trials.

Professor Jamie Triccas from the University of Sydney Institute for Infectious Diseases, Faculty of Medicine and Health, is a principal investigator on the project.

Professor Triccas said the scope of the research project is highly significant. “The successful development of a new vaccine could be an absolute game-changer in terms of reducing the spread of TB and reducing deaths globally.”

“Our research and development will take place over five years with investigation and analysis of TB models occurring in Sydney and three other leading research centres located in Copenhagen, Oregon and New Orleans.”

Professor Warwick Britton AO, Head of the Centenary Institute’s Tuberculosis Research Programme and lead investigator on the project, said that a more effective TB vaccine was urgently needed.

“There’s only one licensed TB vaccine – the Bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine which is over a hundred years old. BCG is effective in reducing the risk of disease for infants but performs poorly in preventing infection in older children and adults,” said Professor Britton.

“A new and improved TB vaccine with increased efficacy rates is required to help decrease the global TB burden and to save lives around the world,” he said.