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NIH discovers new animal model for MERS testing

August 27, 2014 | News | By BioSpectrum Bureau



Singapore: Researchers at the National Institute of Health (NIH) have found that immune responses instigated by MERS infection in humans and marmosets were very similar. They said that marmosets could hence be used as an effective animal model to conduct experiments and clinical trials.

Doctors revealed that marmosets developed severe pneumonia upon infection with MERS, a response, similar to the symptoms experienced by people affected with MERS. The NIH team added that marmosets were used for experiments after studying the binding properties of the virus through computer models.

The earlier studies of MERS in 2012 were conducted on rhesus macaques. However, macaques were not found suitable for the study as they recovered rapidly from the virus, unlike humans.

The MERS outbreak that began in 2012 is haunting Middle Eastern countries with new cases of infection being reported recently. Though the infection has subsided, NIH and many other global experts are brainstorming to develop newer molecules to contain the cases.