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NIH gives Altravax $3.45 mn to make AIDS vaccine

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Altravax gets $3.45 mn to develop HIV/AIDS vaccines



Singapore: Altravax has been awarded two research grants worth a total of $3.45 million from the NIH's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases for research on antibody-inducing vaccines for HIV-1.

UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS, reported that between 2.2-to-2.8 million people, including 330,000 children, were newly infected with HIV in 2011, bringing the total number of people living with AIDS to over 34 million.

Altravax will use its proprietary MolecularBreeding directed evolution technology to create vaccines that provide broad protection against the various strains of HIV-1. The existence of a large number of virus strains and the continued changing nature of the virus is one of the major challenges facing the development of vaccines for HIV/AIDS.

Dr Robert Whalen, CSO, Altravax, is a leader in the application of the MolecularBreeding technology platform to vaccine development. "Our proposal to create vaccines that can more effectively stimulate the immune system represents a novel approach, and the recent award of these two grants will allow us to thoroughly explore this possibility.Ã?Â The current lack of viable vaccine candidates limits the ability of biotechnology companies to invest in HIV vaccine research with their own funds. We appreciate the federal government's willingness to support the goal of a preventative vaccine to combat the AIDS epidemic," said Dr Whalen.

In January 2010, Altravax acquired from Maxygen, exclusive rights to the MolecularBreeding technology platform for the development of vaccines to infectious diseases. The company has a focused product pipeline including vaccines to prevent or treat several infectious diseases.