

Nasal vaccine for Ebola

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Singapore: Scientists at the University of Texas have developed a new breathable vaccine that has been found to be effective in providing long-term protection against the deadly Ebola virus. The researchers claimed that the discovery could have significant global implications in controlling future outbreaks.

The nasal vaccine has shown promise in clinical trials in monkeys, offering a year-long protection against the virus. The vaccine targets cells in the nasal passages and in the lungs, and generates a body-wide immune system response. It affects the mucosa, thus preventing the virus from entering the eyes, nose and mouth, as well as through a cut in the skin.

Professor Maria Croyle, study co-author, said, "The main advantage of our vaccine platform over the others in clinical testing is the long-lasting protection after a single inhaled dose." She added that the respiratory formulation developed provided long-lasting protection when compared to the other injectable vaccines evaluated.

Ms Croyle further explained the cost-effectiveness of this method of immunization, stating that the use of syringes and disposable needles were significantly reduced. She added that the risk of transmission of the virus through needle contamination were also minimal.

Researchers also mentioned that the virus was stable at room temperature, thus easing the process of administration even in humid climates. The Ebola outbreak is finally showing some healing signs with the WHO declaring that the number of new

cases have lowered in Liberia. However, regulators and health experts have expedited the vaccine manufacturing process. Currently, six vaccines are under different stages of development - three in the United States, one in Britain, one in Mali and one in Switzerland.