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Indonesia gets Bio Farma infant pentavalent vaccines

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Singapore: The Indonesian Ministry of Health introduced a new immunization program and a pentavalent vaccine for babies aged two months-to-one year. The vaccine would provide immunity against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, hepatitis B and haemophilus influenzae type B. The pentavalent vaccine, which was being developed by Bio Farma since 2007, was launched by the ministry on August 22, 2013, in Lapangan Karang Pawitan Kabupaten Karawang.

Mr Juliman, production director, Bio Farma, said that besides lowering the frequency of babies' shots, the pentavalent vaccine leads to greater efficiencies. "The use of pentavalent vaccine is expected to diminish production costs, cold chain costs, injector costs, and encourage health officers to be efficient. This cost efficiency will translate to affordability for the people," he added.

Along with the various advantages, the use of pentavalent vaccine is projected to become a future trend for vaccine producers in developing countries. Besides fulfilling domestic demand, Bio Farma plans to export the vaccine to the other countries after the vaccine passes the WHO prequalification assessment, a requirement for the vaccine to be accepted internationally. It is estimated that the pentavalent vaccine demand in Indonesia will reach 15 million doses-a-year, based on the average number of babies' births in Indonesia of five million per year.

Bio Farma has held clinical trials for the pentavalent vaccine since 2010. The vaccine has passed the phase III clinical trial process, ensuring its efficacy for humans. The trial was conducted with Hasan Sadikin Hospital (medical faculty of Padjajaran University) and Cipto Mangunkusumo Hospital (medical faculty of Indonesian University). Pentavalent has also been registered with the National Agency of Drug and Food Control (NADFC).

"This year we will produce and supply the vaccine to four provinces, West Java, Bali, NTB and Yogyakarta, while later we will be able to produce and fulfill the demand of all provinces of Indonesia," said Mr Juliman.