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A new cost effective vaccine against rotavirus

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Rotavirus is a contagious virus that can cause gastroenteritis or inflammation of the stomach and intestines. Infants and young children are most likely to get infected. The usual symptoms include diarrhea, vomiting, fever, abdominal pain.

More than 500,000 children die each year from dehydration and complications of rotavirus, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, claimed by the World Health Organization.

At present, there are two vaccines against rotavirus in the market but they are expensive and require refrigeration. Rotarix vaccine has been manufactured by GlaxoSmithKline, while RotaTeq is a product by Merck and Co., Inc. The new vaccine, called BRV-PV, is manufactured by the Serum Institute of India.

A trial with the new vaccine was conducted in Niger with 67 percent efficacy. This vaccine is particularly adapted to African settings as they need it the most. The efficacy rate of BRV-PV is higher than the effectiveness of RotaTeq (39.3 percent) and Rotarix (61.2 percent).

BRV-PV vaccine is awaiting prequalification by the World Health Organization before it can be purchased by the United Nations and government agencies. No serious adverse events were found to be linked to the vaccine during the trial.