



NEWS RELEASE

IAVI and Merck Collaborate to Develop Vaccine Against SARS-CoV-2

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New Collaboration to Leverage Complementary Expertise and Capabilities with rVSV Technology to Advance Novel Vaccine Candidate

KENILWORTH, N.J. & NEW YORK--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Merck (NYSE: MRK), known as MSD outside the United States and Canada, and IAVI, a nonprofit scientific research organization dedicated to addressing urgent, unmet global health challenges, today announced a new collaboration to develop an investigational vaccine against SARS-CoV-2 to be used for the prevention of COVID-19. This vaccine candidate will use the recombinant vesicular stomatitis virus (rVSV) technology that is the basis for Merck's Ebola Zaire virus vaccine, ERVEBO® (Ebola Zaire Vaccine, Live), which was the first rVSV vaccine approved for use in humans. Merck has also signed an agreement with the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA), part of the office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response within an agency of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, to provide initial funding support for this effort.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here:

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Under the agreement IAVI and Merck will work together to advance the development and global clinical evaluation of a SARS-CoV-2 vaccine candidate designed and engineered by IAVI scientists. The vaccine candidate is in preclinical development, and clinical studies are planned to start later in 2020. Merck will lead regulatory filings globally. Both organizations will work together to develop the vaccine and make it accessible and affordable globally, if approved.

“COVID-19 is an enormous scientific, medical, and global health challenge. Merck is collaborating with organizations around the globe to develop anti-infectives and vaccines that aim to alleviate suffering caused by SARS-CoV-2 infection,” said Dr. Roger M. Perlmutter, president, Merck Research Laboratories. “Merck and IAVI are eager to combine our respective strengths to accelerate development of an rVSV vaccine candidate, with the goal of blunting the trajectory of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

“We believe an rVSV-based vaccine strategy represents a promising approach to combating the novel coronavirus pandemic and look forward to implementing an accelerated development program, together with Merck, to evaluate the potential of our vaccine candidate against SARS-CoV-2. The collaboration between Merck and IAVI represents an innovative partnership model and approach to utilize our joint capabilities in complementary and synergistic ways to address this difficult global health challenge,” said Dr. Mark Feinberg, IAVI president and CEO.

“A safe, effective vaccine will help prevent future outbreaks of SARS-CoV-2,” said BARDA Acting Director Gary Disbrow, Ph.D. “We are encouraged by the willingness of our private sector counterparts to come together as force multipliers to expedite vaccine development and to help save lives.”

Merck is a global leader in infectious diseases and vaccines, with a decades-long history of researching, developing, manufacturing and distributing vaccines for children, adolescents and adults. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Merck is focused on protecting the safety of its employees and their families, ensuring that our supply of medicines and vaccines reaches our patients and customers, contributing our scientific expertise to the development of antiviral and vaccine approaches, and supporting health care providers and our communities. To learn more, please visit www.merck.com/COVID-19.

IAVI’s rVSV vaccine preclinical development, including work on the SARS-CoV-2 vaccine candidate, is being done by scientists at IAVI’s Design and Development Laboratory (DDL) in Brooklyn, New York. This program is part of a long-standing effort to develop rVSV vaccines for HIV as well as other emerging infectious diseases such as Lassa fever, Marburg, and Ebola Sudan disease, under the leadership of Dr. Swati Gupta, head of Emerging Infectious Diseases and Scientific Strategy, IAVI.

About the rVSV Vaccine Platform

The recombinant vesicular stomatitis virus (rVSV) vaccine platform uses an attenuated strain of vesicular stomatitis virus, a common animal virus that has been modified to express proteins that stimulate an immune response. IAVI and Merck will leverage experience gained with this platform during the development of Merck’s rVSV-based vaccine for Ebola Zaire.

About IAVI

IAVI is a nonprofit scientific research organization dedicated to addressing urgent, unmet global health challenges including HIV and tuberculosis. Its mission is to translate scientific discoveries into affordable, globally accessible public health solutions. Read more at iavi.org.

About Merck

For more than 125 years, Merck, known as MSD outside of the United States and Canada, has been inventing for life, bringing forward medicines and vaccines for many of the world's most challenging diseases in pursuit of our mission to save and improve lives. We demonstrate our commitment to patients and population health by increasing access to health care through far-reaching policies, programs and partnerships. Today, Merck continues to be at the forefront of research to prevent and treat diseases that threaten people and animals – including cancer, infectious diseases such as HIV and Ebola, and emerging animal diseases – as we aspire to be the premier research-intensive biopharmaceutical company in the world. For more information, visit www.merck.com and connect with us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

Forward-Looking Statement of Merck & Co., Inc., Kenilworth, N.J., USA

This news release of Merck & Co., Inc., Kenilworth, N.J., USA (the “company”) includes “forward-looking statements” within the meaning of the safe harbor provisions of the U.S. Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These statements are based upon the current beliefs and expectations of the company's management and are subject to significant risks and uncertainties. There can be no guarantees with respect to pipeline products that the products will receive the necessary regulatory approvals or that they will prove to be commercially successful. If underlying assumptions prove inaccurate or risks or uncertainties materialize, actual results may differ materially from those set forth in the forward-looking statements.

Risks and uncertainties include but are not limited to, general industry conditions and competition; general economic factors, including interest rate and currency exchange rate fluctuations; the impact of the recent global outbreak of novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19); the impact of pharmaceutical industry regulation and health care legislation in the United States and internationally; global trends toward health care cost containment; technological advances, new products and patents attained by competitors; challenges inherent in new product development, including obtaining regulatory approval; the company's ability to accurately predict future market conditions; manufacturing difficulties or delays; financial instability of international economies and sovereign risk; dependence on the effectiveness of the company's patents and other protections for innovative products; and the exposure to litigation, including patent litigation, and/or regulatory actions.

The company undertakes no obligation to publicly update any forward-looking statement, whether as a result of

new information, future events or otherwise. Additional factors that could cause results to differ materially from those described in the forward-looking statements can be found in the company's 2019 Annual Report on Form 10-K and the company's other filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) available at the SEC's Internet site (www.sec.gov).

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