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CEPI, Serum Institute of India, Oxford University to establish world's largest Nipah virus vaccine reserve

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Reserve doses could be deployed under emergency use during a future Nipah virus outbreak



One of the world's deadliest viral pathogens, Nipah virus, could soon have a new line of defence against it as Norway-based Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), the University of Oxford and Serum Institute of India (SII), part of Cyrus Poonawalla Group, the world's largest vaccine manufacturer, collaborate to create the world's largest investigational ready reserve of a Nipah virus vaccine candidate.

CEPI funding of up to $7.3 million will support SII for process development and manufacturing of the University of Oxford's ChAdOx1 NipahB vaccine candidate. SII will manufacture doses for use in a Phase II clinical trial in a Nipah-affected country, and create an investigational reserve of up to 100,000 doses, which could be deployed under emergency use during a future Nipah virus outbreak, helping to generate critical data and potentially halt an epidemic in its tracks.

SII will supply the Phase II doses—known as clinical trial material—to the University of Oxford, which is conducting the CEPI-funded clinical trials. These mid-stage trials are set to be the first Phase II trials for a Nipah virus vaccine candidate to take place anywhere in the world.

Nipah virus, belonging to the paramyxovirus family, kills up to 75 percent of people it infects. The majority of outbreaks have occurred in India and Bangladesh since it was first discovered in Malaysia in 1999, with Bangladesh experiencing outbreaks almost annually since 2001. Despite its lethality, there are currently no approved countermeasures to defend against it. CEPI is working to change that as the world's largest funder of Nipah virus R&D, committing around $150 million to its Nipah virus vaccine, biologics and enabling science programmes.

The ChAdOx1 NipahB vaccine is based on the same viral vector platform technology as the licensed Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine. SII produced over 2 billion doses of ChAdOx-COVID-19 vaccine and is well placed to leverage its past experience and manufacturing capabilities to establish an investigational reserve of ChAdOx1 NipahB virus vaccine doses to be stored and maintained at its facilities in Pune.