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Milestone payment for NTS vaccine project

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Bangalore: Bharat Biotech and The University of Maryland Center for Vaccine Development have received a $4 million strategic translation award from The Wellcome Trust for clinical development of a new conjugate vaccine, including initial clinical trials beginning in three years, to prevent the potentially lethal infectious disease caused by invasive non-typhoidal salmonella (NTS).

NTS have emerged as an important cause of invasive bloodstream infection in sub-Saharan Africa, among young children with malaria and malnutrition, and among adults with HIV. Strains of NTS that can cause systemic disease such as meningitis or sepsis are particularly common in sub-Saharan Africa; approximately 20 percent to 30 percent of children with such invasive NTS infections die.

"The impact, importance of academic and industry partnership is far reaching," said Dr Krishna Ella, chairman and managing director, Bharat Biotech. "The CVD NTS project is a testimony of our belief in collaborative research and our commitment to introduce highly effective and affordable vaccines to solve region specific neglected diseases in the developing world."

"It's an imprimatur," says Professor Myron Levine, director of the CVD, "because of the prestige associated with the Trust's involvement, the rigorous vetting process, and the opportunity for the University, in collaboration with Bharat Biotech, to bring forth a potentially life-saving vaccine for a very underserved population." Professor Levine believes that Bharat Biotech brings critical expertise as CVD's project partner in terms of conjugate vaccine development and manufacturing.

The University of Maryland Center for Vaccine Development has brought in significant grant funding over the past few decades to support its extensive vaccine development programs, but this recent achievement of Wellcome Trust funding for its collaborative NTS Vaccine Development project with Bharat Biotech holds special significance.

Experts from Bharat Biotech and University of Maryland's are upbeat on the prospects of developing NTS Conjugate Vaccine. They stated this PPP project represents a true translational public-private partnership that not only enables potentially

lifesaving vaccine technology to move towards the marketplace and to the public health arena, but also demonstrates international multi-party technology transfer collaborations to help advance its science.