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Chickungunya can soon be prevented with a vaccine

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Singapore: Australian biotech firm, Themis Bioscience GmbH declared the successful interim results of their prophylactic vaccine candidate against Chikungunya fever on June 12, 2014. The experimental vaccine candidate reportedly used anti-measles vaccine as a vector and triggered a significant neutralizing immune response.

Chikungunya is potentially a vector-borne viral disease that causes severe fever and chronic joint aches. The epidemic is currently prevailing across geographies, mainly the Caribbean and this indicated the urgent need for a measure to curtail a community spread.

The comprehensive study was carried out in 42 subjects in the Department of Clinical Pharmacology at the Vienna General Hospital. The research confirmed that the immunogenicity and safety of the vaccine matched the expectations, with lowest doses too being significantly effective.

Dr Erich Tauber, CEO of the firm said in a statement, "The successful clinical study forms the basis of our pipeline comprising a dengue fever vaccine candidate and vaccine constructs for other rapidly spreading infectious diseases." He further added that Themaxyn platform offered safe and potent vaccine at low costs.

Chikungunya has a world wide presence with sporadic cases confirmed in Asia as well as the US. With no vaccine till date, the company's discovery is said to be a milestone breakthrough in handling further spread of the disease.