

Scientists work toward a Chlamydia vaccine

July 25 2006

U.S. scientists studying how the immune system responds to genital tract infections are using a mouse model to track immunity against Chlamydia.

The Harvard Medical School researchers say their findings might hasten the development of vaccines for Chlamydia -- the most common cause of bacterial sexually transmitted disease in the United States.

"Right now Chlamydia is sensitive to treatment with antibiotics," said Michael Starnbach, associate professor of microbiology and molecular genetics. "But the problem is that many people have 'silent' infections that remain untreated,

"These undiagnosed infections, over time, lead to complications like tubal pregnancy and infertility. The goal would be to vaccinate young people to keep them from suffering from undiagnosed infection and the bad outcomes associated with it."

The study -- funded by the National Institutes of Health -- appears in the early online edition of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

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Citation: Scientists work toward a Chlamydia vaccine (2006, July 25) retrieved 20 April 2024

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