

Institute develops cheap cholera vaccine

April 20 2009

An international health organisation said Monday it has developed the world's first cheap cholera vaccine which has been licensed in India, paving the way for its global use.

The Seoul-based International Vaccine Institute (IVI) said the new product costs about one dollar per dose compared to the existing internationally licensed [oral vaccine](#) which was too expensive for developing countries -- costing 18 dollars a dose in Bangladesh.

John Clemens, the institute director-general, said in a statement the licensing of the new product in India "paves the way for a wider use of the vaccine in cholera-endemic populations in [Asia](#) and elsewhere."

This was because the World Health Organisation (WHO) has approved the national regulatory authority there.

The IVI said it modified a Vietnamese-made product to create the new vaccine, with help from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the governments of South Korea and Sweden.

It said the [vaccine](#) has been tested in the slums of the Indian city of Kolkata and initial results showed it confers significant protection.

The IVI, citing a WHO report, said cholera claimed 4,031 lives in 177,963 outbreaks in 53 countries -- mostly in Africa -- in 2007.

It said the actual number of deaths from cholera, given widespread under-

reporting, is estimated at up to 120,000 a year.

"The use of safe and effective cholera vaccines in cholera-endemic areas could lead to a significant and rapid decline in [cholera](#) incidence and, ultimately, to its control worldwide," said Clemens.

The United Nations Development Program launched the IVI in South Korea in 1997. It is the world's only international body working exclusively on developing vaccines for the world's poorest people.

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Citation: Institute develops cheap cholera vaccine (2009, April 20) retrieved 4 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-04-cheap-cholera-vaccine.html>

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