

Ebola vaccine not before late 2016: GSK researcher

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An Ebola vaccine by British pharmaceuticals giant GlaxoSmithKline may not be ready for commercial use until late 2016 and should therefore not be seen as the "primary answer" to the current outbreak, a company researcher said.

"We have to be able to manufacture the [vaccine](#) at doses that would be consistent with general use and that's going to take well into 2016," Doctor Ripley Ballou, head of GSK's Ebola vaccine research unit, told BBC radio in an interview aired on Friday.

"I don't think this vaccine should be seen as the primary answer to this particular outbreak but we certainly hope that this vaccine could be used to prevent future outbreaks.

"Unfortunately it's not going to be as quickly as we would like," he said, adding: "In retrospect we should have pulled the trigger earlier."

Ballou said data on the vaccine's efficacy and safety would not be available before the end of 2015.

"In order for the vaccine to be used we have to have data on its safety and its efficacy and those data will not be available before the end of 2015," he said.

He added that the whole process was "incredibly accelerated" as vaccine development would normally take seven to 10 years.

GSK's is one of two vaccines along with one by US group NewLink Genetics that the World Health Organization has been focusing on and it has helped accelerate clinical trials.

Some clinical trials of the GSK vaccine have begun in the United States and Britain and the WHO has said that around 10,000 doses of the vaccine should be available by early 2015.

Medical charity Medecins sans Frontieres (MSF, Doctors Without Borders) voiced disappointment, saying work on the vaccine had to be speeded up.

"While we recognise and appreciate the vastly accelerated development of GSK's Ebola vaccine, efforts need to go further as we believe a vaccine could be important in curbing this outbreak as well as preventing and controlling Ebola in the future," said Manica Balasegaram, executive director of MSF's access campaign.

"Nobody knows how long this [outbreak](#) will last for; our patients, front-line workers, and people across West Africa can't afford to hear 'it's too late'," she said.

"We need GSK to show leadership by making a bold decision now and take on some risk in driving through a process of accelerating development in parallel with the scale-up of supply."

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