University of Maryland researchers testing potential vaccine for E. coli, Shigella

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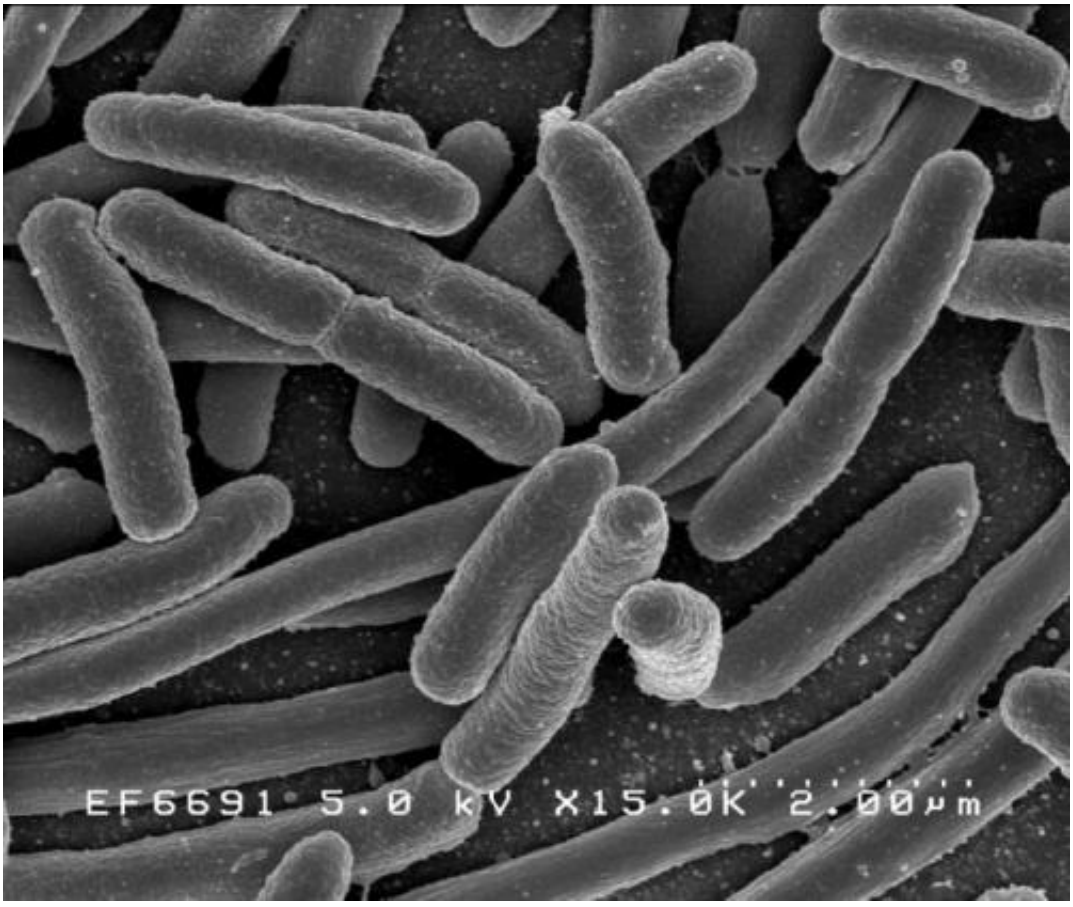

Escherichia coli. Credit: Rocky Mountain Laboratories, NIAID, NIH

Researchers at the University of Maryland's medical school are testing a potential vaccine for E. coli and other diarrheal diseases.

In a news release, the university wrote that Dr. Wilburn Chen and Dr. Eileen Barry will test a vaccine developed at the School of Medicine's Center for Vaccine Development and Global Health.

The testing is being funded by a $4.5 million agreement with Emergent Biosolutions, "a global life sciences company focused on addressing public health threats, including travel health diseases," the university wrote.

The vaccine will look to combat the bacteria Shigella and enterotoxigenic Escherichia coli, more commonly referred to as E. coli.

"Our goal here is to develop a vaccine that can be delivered broadly to those who are most susceptible to the risks of these diseases," Chen said. "This is something that can help serve the most vulnerable populations in low resource settings in sub-Sahara Africa and South Asia, where the disease burden is highest."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as of Dec. 2, 102 people have been infected with the strain of E. coli O157:H7 in 23 states this year.

The university wrote the doctors "will test the safety, tolerability and potential protection of oral doses of the prototype Shigella-ETEC vaccine."

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