

Meningitis B Vaccine Development

Dear Friends

I'm sure many of you will have heard the breaking news – either online, on TV or in the papers – about the Meningitis B vaccine which is being developed by the pharmaceutical company Novartis. The Phase II trial of the vaccine involved 150 infants from the UK, and the new data from this was presented yesterday at the European Society for Paediatric Infectious Diseases' annual meeting. The findings from the data show that the vaccine is producing high immunity against three strains of Meningitis B in the infants involved. The Novartis Meningitis B vaccine is now in Phase III trials, and we look forward to the results of that.

Obviously this is very encouraging news, and we are delighted with developments, but I would appeal to you all to keep up your support for Meningitis UK. It is vital that our Meningitis UK research programme continues to go ahead, as there is still a long way to go to reach a standard Meningitis B vaccine which is proven to provide broad coverage against all strains.

The Meningitis B bacterium is incredibly complex and developing a vaccine to protect against it has always been one of the biggest challenges in meningitis vaccine development. When developing a vaccine, there are so many avenues that need to be explored and sadly the vast majority of approaches will fail at some stage. However, other pharmaceutical companies are also in the process of developing their own vaccine candidates, and we will keep you updated on any news. Many of our research projects add value to this, and our Search 4 a Vaccine Campaign will continue to forge ahead.

Today, Meningitis UK is featured online on the BBC's Health Pages – if you click <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/7400593.stm> you can read the full story. As I write to you we are also hoping to be featured in further media, including a spot on Channel 5's lunchtime and evening news.

With best wishes

Steve

Steve Dayman
Chief Executive
Meningitis UK
25 Cleeve Wood Road
Downend
Bristol
BS16 2SF

Telephone: 0117 373 73 73

Fax: 0117 373 73 74

www.meningitisUK.org