

Vaccines: is paying more the answer?

The development and distribution of vaccines has *'always been great public policy'*, but to *'reverse the continuing degradation of vaccine supplies, it will need to be made a good business as well'*, says Dr Rino Rappuoli from Chiron Corporation, US.

Dr Rappuoli notes that major pharmaceutical companies have shown little interest in developing new vaccines despite a desperate need, particularly for diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis. Although the development of effective vaccines has proved to be a considerable challenge, the scientific obstacles are only *'part of a wider story'*, says Dr Rappuoli. For example, recently, despite present knowledge for improved smallpox and anthrax vaccine development, only under threat of terror attacks were funds made available for development. *'Put simply, vaccines should cost more'*, Dr Rappuoli says.

Dr Rappuoli notes that *'a good vaccine is nearly always the most effective way to tackle any infectious disease'*, and the aim of the GAVI*, and other such efforts, must be to *'make it in [pharmaceutical] companies' interests to invest in vaccines'*. Governments should support vaccine research through tax credits and extend patents on vaccines, and streamline regulations to allow easier exportation, Dr Rappuoli contends. Wealthy nations will need to *'shoulder much of the burden'* of the development and manufacture of vaccines for poorer nations; however, developing nations, too, must consider vaccines a higher priority and assign higher budgets to their development, Dr Rappuoli adds.

* Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization

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