

HIV vaccine: co-operation mandatory

Ongoing research in the field of HIV inhibitory genes offers hope, but finding an HIV-preventive vaccine still presents some difficulties, says Professor Robert C Gallo from the National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, US.

The limited utility of current animal models, the great variability of HIV, the failure to define immune parameters of protection for humans, and the apparent decline in interest by pharmaceutical and vaccine companies, are among the obstacles to efficacy field testing of HIV vaccines in humans. However, without trials in humans, we may never know which immune parameters to seek, comments Professor Gallo.

Lack of success?

While he is strongly against vaccine trials with attenuated (but still infectious) HIV in humans, he points out that the use of attenuated viral vectors such as poxvirus or adenovirus, as recombinants with HIV genes, has produced encouraging results in animal studies. This approach has conferred protection against human T-cell lymphotropic virus type 1 and HIV-2 infection.

In view of the lack of sufficient success and incentives in HIV vaccine development, financial commitment and effective leadership are now required, says Professor Gallo. He concludes that '*cooperation is now mandatory*', in the development of an effective HIV vaccine.

Gallo RC. Human retroviruses in the second decade: a personal perspective. *Nature Medicine* 1: 753-759, Aug 1995

800372864