Letter to the Editor

Dengue v2V—New global initiative supporting transition from vaccine to vaccination

Keywords: Dengue Vaccine Infectious disease

Dear Editor,

I am writing to announce the formation of a scientific forum committed to ensuring that future dengue vaccines, once licensed, are readily introduced into the vaccination programmes of countries with the highest burden of disease. The chosen name, Dengue v2V, reflects its fundamental objective of supporting the transition from vaccine to vaccination. Dengue v2V is led by a steering committee comprising vaccinologists, virologists, epidemiologists, public health specialists and infectious disease specialists from South-East Asia, the Americas, Caribbean, Europe and Australia (Table 1).

Dengue v2V recognises that a key element in achieving this overall goal is to coordinate efforts with other organisations such as the Pediatric Dengue Vaccine Initiative (PDVI) and the WHO in a synergistic fashion.

The detailed objectives of Dengue v2V (Table 2) were agreed at the first annual steering committee meeting held in London (29–30 June 2009). Each proposed objective was discussed at length by members and required consensual agreement before being accepted.

Dengue is a mosquito-borne viral disease found primarily in tropical countries of the developing world and represents a major international health concern. The rising incidence of dengue and continued geographical spread make the development of an effective vaccine a global health priority. Dengue is currently present in more than 100 countries, and affects 70–500 million people per year.

There is no specific treatment, while vector control strategies are unsustainable and largely ineffective. No dengue vaccine is currently available but the most advanced candidate is presently undergoing a Phase IIb proof of concept efficacy trial in Thailand.

Dengue v2V is a long-term initiative whose future activities will include annual steering committee meetings as well as focused workshops addressing a number of critically important issues.

Table 1
Dengue v2V Steering Committee members.

| Chairperson: Sai Kit Lam (Malaysia) |
| Co-chair: Rémy Teyssou (France) |
| Donald Burke (USA) |
| Jean Lang (France) |
| Jorge Méndez-Gálvan (Mexico) |
| Pratap Singhhasivanon (Thailand) |
| Jaco Smit (France) |
| Laurent Thomas (Martinique) |
| Joseph Torresi (Australia) |
| Pedro Vasconcelos (Brazil) |

Table 2
Objectives of Dengue v2V.

- Establish and document the human cost and high economic burden of dengue
- Raise awareness of the public health benefit associated with dengue vaccination
- Define recommendations regarding the introduction of dengue vaccine for routine immunisation, including:
  - Country/regional specificities
  - Identify and provide solutions to overcome hurdles
  - Facilitate access to high level discussion in key countries and international organisations
- Provide guidance regarding adoption strategies based on clinical and epidemiological and other technical data in order to expedite the introduction of the vaccine in endemic countries
- Help shape approach with key decision makers
- Define and advocate evidence-based decisions, recognising that additional evidence will be needed after vaccine introduction
- Advocate funding for broad access to the dengue vaccine and/or initiate innovative sources of financing

Accurate dengue epidemiological and burden of disease data are lacking for many countries and are critical to establishing the cost-effectiveness and desirability of introducing a dengue vaccine into national immunisation programmes. Successful integration of vaccine candidates requires a detailed country-specific understanding of coverage and scheduling of national immunisation programmes, including any local implementation, logistical or compliance difficulties. In addition, vaccination introduction strategies must be tailored according to the known dengue epidemiology and customs of each country, which may vary considerably. Importantly, predictive modelling can be used to simulate the potential impact of different vaccination strategies.

Workshops will include steering committee members as well as invited delegates from academia, government and other health organisations, with expertise in relevant areas. The results of these meetings will be distributed to the public and made available via a dedicated website in the future.

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Conflict of interest

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1 On behalf of the Dengue v2V Steering Committee.

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