

Biovac and EuBiologics partner for meningitis vaccine tech transfer

South African biopharmaceutical manufacturer, Biovac, has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with global South Korean-based manufacturer EuBiologics, for the technology transfer of a Meningococcal Meningitis pentavalent conjugate vaccine.



Source: Reuters.

This collaboration is a significant development for Biovac, as it would allow for the local production and distribution of a life-saving vaccine for use across Africa.

Meningococcal meningitis is a bacterial form of meningitis, a serious infection of the thin lining that surrounds the brain and spinal cord.

Meningococcal meningitis can be associated with an overall case-fatality ratio of 10% to 15% for meningococcal disease even with appropriate antibiotic therapy and can be as high as 50% in persons with meningococemia, the invasive form of the disease.

Importantly, as many as 20% of survivors have permanent clinical sequelae, such as hearing loss, neurological damage, or loss of a limb. Meningococcal meningitis is present worldwide; however, regions of the world have different circulating serotypes.

The highest unmet medical need is in the meningitis belt of sub-Saharan Africa, stretching from Senegal in the west to Ethiopia in the east, where there are new circulating serotypes such as serotype X .

Morena Makhoana, Biovac chief executive officer, states “This Meningococcal vaccine candidate which is currently under clinical development and is planned to be locally manufactured in Africa for Africa is a particularly important vaccine as it protects against the relevant circulating serotypes for our continent.

“In addition, the vaccine will be a fully liquid vaccine which allows for ease of use. We are particularly excited at the opportunity to partner with EuBiologics that share the same values of making a positive impact on the lives of people on our continent, particularly at a time when Africa is on a journey to vaccine manufacturing self-sufficiency.”

Global collaboration for health impact

Chief executive officer of EuBiologics, Baik Yeong-ok, expressed his enthusiasm stating: “We are very pleased to have signed an MOU with Biovac for the technology transfer of the pentavalent conjugate vaccine.

“This is the beginning of the collaboration between the two companies, but I am hopeful that this will lead to an improvement in global public health, the capacity building of an African manufacturer, and, most importantly, an impact on lives in Africa, where the disease burden is highest.”

The MOU was signed in Cape Town, while Biovac co-hosted the 24th Annual General Meeting of the Developing Countries Vaccine Manufacturing Network (DCVMN), which brought together vaccine manufacturers, global partners, and stakeholders from across the globe.

This collaboration represents the kind of partnership which is key for vaccine manufacturing to sustainably grow on the continent and improve health equity outcomes globally.

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