



Malaria Vaccine to be Launched in Three to Five Years

The first-ever Phase III trial for a malaria vaccine has officially begun, with more than 5,000 African children already receiving the first round of a malaria vaccine candidate developed by GlaxoSmithKline, researchers announced on November 3, 2009 at a pan-African conference on malaria in Nairobi, Kenya.

In Phase II trials, the vaccine showed a 53% reduction in clinical episodes of malaria for eight months in children 5 to 17 months old and in a trial in Mozambique of children aged 1 to 4 years suggested that the vaccine is capable of providing protection for up to 45 months, but at a lower rate of efficacy.

“Of course 53% is not ideal,” said a malaria vaccine researcher, who is not involved in the study. “The world would like to see 80 to 90% efficacy and slightly longer lasting effects, but clearly the research is moving in a positive direction.”

The current trial, now underway in seven African countries, aims to enroll up to 16,000 children in two target age groups: 5 to 17 months and 6 to 12 weeks. If all goes as planned, the first set of data could be ready to submit for regulatory review in 2012.

The vaccine candidate specifically targets *Plasmodium falciparum*, the malaria parasite that causes the overwhelming majority of cases of the disease in Africa.