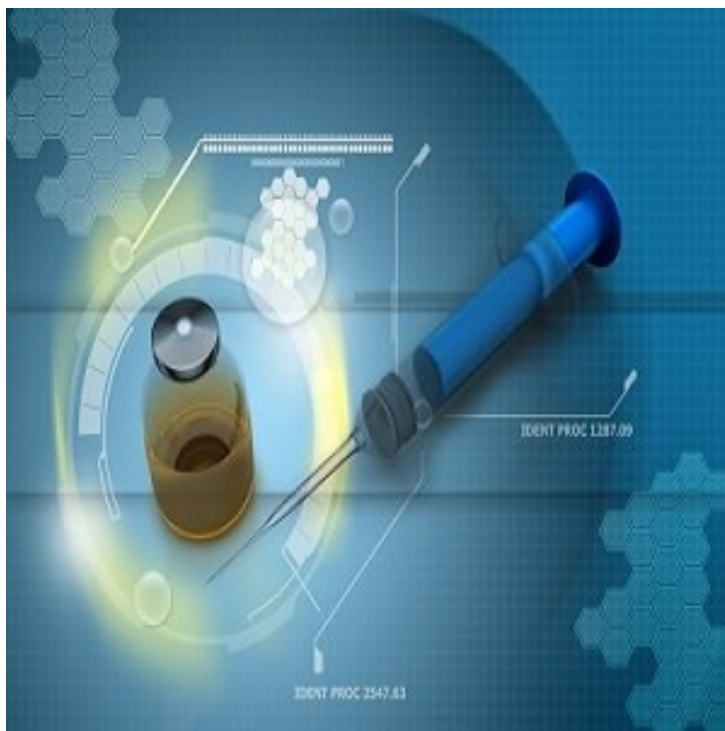


Ebola vaccine in progress, challenges ahead

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Singapore: In a recently organized expert consultation by WHO to assess the status of work to test and eventually license two candidate Ebola vaccines, the healthcare organization stressed that with the progress of two potential ebola vaccines, the developer fraternity is facing potential challenges and uncertainties including barriers to rapid implementation of R&D, design of trials and their use to guide eventual widespread vaccination.

Some of the challenges are:

- Management of cold supply chain where a candidate vaccine must be stored at a temperature of -80°C.
- Identifying right manpower who can conduct trials meeting international standards, logistical issues (such as cold chain needs for the vaccines), and the resources needed to start the studies quickly.
- Some of the scientific challenges include how to conduct studies as safely and rapidly as possible to inform decisions about mass production of vaccines and their administration.

The members emphasized that one issue of paramount importance is the need for data sharing, in real time, among the research, medical, and public health communities, coordinated by WHO, to inform decisions on future studies and scaling up the production of those experimental vaccines that look most promising.

Vaccine development normally takes a long time and is notoriously costly. Even under the best conditions and with the massive efforts of many partners, a significant number of doses will not be available until late in the first quarter of 2015, WHO has updated.

WHO also touched on the importance of funding from the potential partners to ensure the production of the vaccine and to support priority studies.