

WRAIR Technology helps create Japanese Encephalitis Vaccine

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By **Tiffany Holloway, AMRMC DPAO**

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What is it'

Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR) has developed a technology to fight the Japanese Encephalitis (JE), which is caused by a mosquito-transmitted virus, found mainly in Asia. Military personnel will now have an efficacious and safe vaccine to protect themselves during deployments.

JE is a serious and growing public health threat in Asia. In Asia, JE affects about 30,000 to 50,000 people each year, resulting in 10,000 to 15,000 deaths. The virus that causes JE affects membranes around the brain and mild infections can occur without apparent symptoms other than fever and headache.

What has the Army done'

Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR) developed the technology which, through a cooperative research and development agreement (CRADA), was transferred to a commercial company who used their own resources to achieve licensure of the Japanese encephalitis vaccine that will be used by the DOD. WRAIR's contribution included the technology, preclinical studies, pilot bio-production, clinical studies, and additional field studies for final FDA approval. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved Intercell's IXIARO, a vaccine to prevent Japanese encephalitis (JE) March 30.

The institute also participated in the conduct of the pivotal clinical trials. U.S. Army Medical Materiel Development Activity (USAMMDA) functioned as the liaison between the Military Vaccines Agency (MILVAX), and the Defense Supply Center Philadelphia (DSCP).

Why is this important to the Army'

Soldiers need this vaccine so that they can stay healthy and accomplish their mission.

No treatment is currently available for JE and only vaccination effectively prevents the disease. This new vaccine was necessitated by the need to replace out-dated technologies used for the previous JE vaccine.

As per Col. Kent E. Kester, commander of the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research: "The development and successful licensure of a new vaccine that will protect members of the U.S. military against Japanese Encephalitis is an important milestone in the long successful history of U.S. military medical research - research focused on the development of operationally-relevant medical solutions for the Warfighter. In addition to its landmark research in a variety of operationally-focused areas, the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research remains fully engaged in developing a wide range of vaccines, drugs, and diagnostic devices intended to address the worldwide infectious disease threats facing our Soldiers."

What has the Army planned for the future'

USAMRMC will continue to study and monitor this vaccine for safety and efficacy.

Resources:

<http://mrmc.amedd.army.mil> U.S. Army Medical Research & Materiel Command

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/jencephalitis/> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site

<http://www.fda.gov/cber/vaccines.htm> U.S. Food and Drug Administration

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