



Vaccines to prevent TB

TB is a serious condition that can be fatal if left untreated, it has claimed many lives in the past. There is an urgent need for vaccination to prevent the disease.

Opening the second plenary of the conference was Dr Willem Hanekom, Director of the South African Tuberculosis Vaccines Initiative (SATVI) talking about the need for vaccination to prevent TB. During his opening statement he emphasised the necessity to replace or to improve the Bacillus Calmette-Guerin (BCG) vaccine.

There are new groups of vaccines which the SATVI is researching in the hope that the vaccines will work better than the BCG vaccine. These vaccines include Recombinant live mycobacterial vaccines, Recombinant viral vectored vaccines and Recombinant protein vaccines. The SATVI is also working on introducing better models of testing vaccines so that they can be able to improve on the quality of the vaccines.

Dr Hanekom furthermore highlighted that during their research they have realised that if they want to make an impact they have to cure and prevent the disease on older people then adults and adolescence before they could focus on the infants. Children don't show server symptoms of TB until they are adults and they become vulnerable and weak with time.

"Patients with untreatable TB and living in our communities are contributing to the spreading of the infection," said Prof Keertan Dheda, Professor of Medicine and Head of the Division of Pulmonology at the University of Cape Town and Groote Schuur Hospital. Prof Dheda spoke of the need for National strategy to provide funding for a combination of home based care, community stay facilities with multi-disciplinary teams for treatment failures and palliative care facilities to help prevent the spread of the disease.

Prof Dheda also stressed the drawbacks of the TB drugs which include long duration, injectable agent adds cost and discomfort, toxic (Shean & Dheda, PLoS One, 2013), does not take advantage of rapidly available genotypic information (kat G and INHA), not individualised for evolving DR patterns globally and need an oral, short, efficacious and safe regimen.

Ends.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

About The Foundation for Professional Development (FPD)

The Foundation for Professional Development (FPD) is a South African Private Institution of Higher Education dedicated to building a better society through education and capacity development. FPD annually provides management and clinical training to 50 000 healthcare professionals and managers across Africa and has support the initiation on ART of more than 390 000 PLHIV. FPD also organises national and international conferences as a conduit to shape public and policy perspectives. FPD's involvement in conferences dates back to the Durban in 2000 conference where it provided the conference secretariat. For more information please visit www.foundation.co.za.

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