



Emerging and Reemerging Infectious Diseases, Region of the Americas

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Update on Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)

This past 5 November 2003, the WHO Consultation on SARS Vaccine Research and Development was held, involving the participation of more than 50 researchers from 15 countries. The group reviewed progress in the field and identified ways to accelerate the development and evaluation of SARS vaccines.

Most of the experts agreed that a safe and effective vaccine would be an important complement to existing SARS control strategies but that a SARS vaccine will not be available in time should an epidemic reoccur at the end of this year. In this regard, any possible resurgence of SARS should be handled through the control measures currently effective (surveillance, early diagnosis, hospital infection control, contact-tracing and international reporting).

The following subjects were discussed:

- The genetic variability of the SARS coronavirus, to identify the best strains to be included in future vaccines.
- Recent work involving experimental vaccines used on animals, and how that information can be used to initiate future clinical trials in human volunteers. The first clinical trial on an inactivated SARS vaccine could begin as early as January 2004. However, it is difficult to say when the vaccine might be available.
- Topics related to patents and intellectual property were discussed, along with preventive measures to facilitate these processes and ensure that, once developed, the vaccine would be universally available.
- Specific regulation measures were also discussed for the clinical evaluation and licensing for SARS vaccines.

For more information, see the source cited below.

Source: [*Global Search for SARS Vaccine Gains Momentum*](#), online on the WHO SARS page.