



California Scientific Institutions Collaborate on Human Vaccines Project

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It's an engaging time for the vaccines industry. The world's first dengue fever vaccine recently launched in the Philippines. Several pharmaceutical companies are scrambling to develop a Zika vaccine, with the first human clinical trials beginning as soon as the late summer, experts say. And the effort to develop a successful HIV vaccine moves onward.

Vaccine development for major diseases, like HIV, tuberculosis, cancer and others, has hit its share of roadblocks. It's no secret that the research and development (R&D) stages of a vaccine take years, and that it often employs the collaboration of private and public institutions.

Now, four California-based scientific institutions — University of California, San Diego, J. Craig Venter Institute, La Jolla Institute for Allergy and Immunology, and the Scripps Research Institute — are teaming up to create a new Human Vaccines Project scientific hub, called "Mesa Consortium" to aid in the R&D of vaccines and biologics for these global diseases.

Leading research centers, pharmaceutical companies and nonprofits are a part of the Human Vaccines Project, in an effort to decode the human immune system to accelerate the development of vaccines and immunotherapies against major infectious diseases and cancers.

The Mesa Consortium, which will be the Human Vaccine Project's bioinformatics core, will perform extensive immunological analyses from clinical research studies designed to answer specific questions about human immunity, according to a press release.

"New genetic and immune monitoring technologies are enabling an unprecedented look at the human immune system," said J. Craig Venter, Ph.D., CEO of the Institute, "and are generating extensive amounts of data. When combined with sophisticated bioinformatics analyses, we may soon be able to unlock the principles of how to stimulate and direct immune responses against some of the world's most pressing diseases"