New polio vaccine shows promise in clinical trial

By ACSH Staff — October 27, 2010

Britain’s GlaxoSmithKline and India’s Panacea Biotec have formulated an oral bivalent polio vaccine — capable of protecting against two strains of the virus — that has proven more effective than the previously used vaccines, according to a study published in The Lancet yesterday. Polio is a viral disease that attacks the nervous system, which often leads to irreversible paralysis within hours of infection. The industry-sponsored study randomly assigned 830 newborn babies in India to one of five vaccine groups. The results showed that the new bivalent vaccine protected 90 and 84 percent of the babies against type 1 and 3 polio, respectively — a significant improvement over the trivalent vaccine, believed to be inferior because the presence of the type 2 polio virus vaccine interferes with antibody production against the other two strains.

The new vaccine will be used on 56 million African children in a large, donor-financed campaign to eradicate polio starting this week. The $42.6 million vaccine initiative is a joint effort by the World Health Organization, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, USAID, Rotary International, UNICEF and the governments of Germany and Japan.


Links