

Headline	End of the road for HIV		
MediaTitle	The Star		
Date	29 Nov 2016	Color	Black/white
Section	World	Circulation	338,368
Page No	23,28	Readership	1,032,000
Language	English	ArticleSize	165 cm <sup>2</sup>
Journalist	N/A	AdValue	RM 3,945
Frequency	Daily	PR Value	RM 11,835



## End of the road for HIV?

A new vaccine trial starting in South Africa could alter the course of the pandemic. >28

# New HIV vaccine trial to start in South Africa

**JOHANNESBURG:** A new vaccine against HIV, to be tested in a trial to be launched in South Africa tomorrow, could be “the final nail in the coffin” for the disease if it is successful, scientists say.

The study, called HVTN 702, aims to enrol 5,400 sexually active men and women aged between 18 and 35 at 15 sites across South Africa.

It will be the largest and most advanced HIV vaccine clinical trial to take place in South Africa, where more than 1,000 people a day are infected with HIV.

“If deployed alongside our current armoury of proven HIV pre-

vention tools, a safe and effective vaccine could be the final nail in the coffin for HIV,” Anthony Fauci, director of the US government’s National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), said in a statement.

“Even a moderately effective vaccine would significantly decrease the burden of HIV disease over time in countries and populations with high rates of HIV infection, such as South Africa,” he said.

The vaccine being tested in HVTN 702 is based on a 2009 trial in Thailand, that was found to be 31.2% effective at preventing HIV

infection over the 3.5 years of follow-up after the vaccination.

The new vaccine aims to provide greater and more sustained protection and has been adapted to the HIV subtype that predominates in southern Africa.

“HIV has taken a devastating toll in South Africa, but now we begin a scientific exploration that could hold great promise for our country,” said Glenda Gray, chief executive officer of the South African Medical Research Council.

“If an vaccine were found to work here, it could dramatically alter the course of the pandemic.”

Volunteers for the study, funded by NIAID, are being randomly assigned to receive either the vaccine regimen or a placebo. They will receive five injections over a year.

Participants who become infected with HIV in the community will be referred to local medical providers for care and treatment and will be counselled on how to reduce their risk of transmitting the virus.

South Africa has more than 6.8 million people living with HIV, but the country has had a remarkable success in rolling out an HIV drug treatment programme, said to be the largest in the world. — AP