



*In Search of Better Health*

## PRESS RELEASE

**TO: NEWS EDITORS & REPORTERS**

**SUBJECT: KEMRI ANNOUNCES NEW TB VACCINE & TREATMENT PROMISE**

**DATE: FRIDAY, 24<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2023**

**NAIROBI-KENYA:** As we mark the World Tuberculosis (TB) Day, the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) highlights research milestones against a disease responsible for at least six percent all of deaths in the country.

While earlier research at KEMRI reduced the treatment period from 18 to 6 months, current research in TB is harnessing technology in diagnosis, clinical drugs and vaccine therapeutics towards better and lasting solutions to TB. Kenya is moving towards shortening this treatment period further to 4 months and Institute hopes to support the National TB Control program in rolling out this new treatment program.

KEMRI through its Centre for Respiratory Diseases Research (CRDR) has doubled efforts clinical trials for two promising TB vaccines for both adults and children. The team is working on a BCG recombinant Phase III vaccines trial for infants in Nairobi and Siaya Counties where at least 1,500 participants have been recruited for the vaccine candidate from the Serum Institute of India.

Additionally, researchers are also following progress on another Phase III vaccine clinical trials for adolescents and adults. KEMRI participated in a Phase II trials of the m72 candidate TB vaccine that recruited approximately 3,500 adults across several African countries that showed an efficacy signal. The development of this vaccine candidate was taken up by the Gates Medical Research Institute (GMRI) and KEMRI, if selected by the sponsor, is geared-up to participate in a Phase III licensure trials be conducted across many other countries in Africa.

These vaccines have a likelihood to be adopted by World Health Organization (WHO) and used in protection for TB. This therefore means KEMRI is making the necessary strides in achieving the country's Universal Healthcare (UHC).

At the same time, researchers in KEMRI together with partners are working on a novel technology that is to support TB diagnosing children which is still a major problem globally. The study will devise the best ways to diagnose TB in children using a system that will be able to confirm the presence of TB in small amounts of blood obtained by checking for extracellular vesicles as well as accessing the presence of TB cell free DNA in urine and blood. If successful, TB will be detected in less invasive specimen types which will highly contribute to increase in diagnosis in children.

Modern technology is also being embraced in TB diagnosis; another study is investigating cough sense which is a software that is able to distinguish between a TB cough and any other cough. This is going to change the dynamics of diagnosing a TB patient.

Finally, KEMRI has actively participated in TB research that has seen its treatment period reduce from 18 to 6 months. Researchers at the Institute are working tirelessly to find lasting solutions to TB diagnosis and treatment that will inform better human health in the country.

**Kindly, find attached links to video material for publication.**

<https://we.tl/t-rVR05WBbEQ>

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### **About KEMRI**

*The Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) is a State Corporation established in Kenya in 1979 through the Science and Technology (Repealed) Act, Cap 250 of the Laws of Kenya operated under the Science Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 as the national body responsible for carrying out research in human health in Kenya. Currently, KEMRI operates under Legal Notice No. 35 of March 2021 KEMRI has grown from its humble beginning over 40 years ago to become a regional leader in human health research. The Institute currently ranks as one of the leading Centers of excellence in health research both in Africa as well as globally.*