



Joint Press Release

For immediate release

THE FIRST MALARIA VACCINE TRIAL IN INDONESIA AND THE FIRST IN ASIA-PACIFIC IN 30 YEARS

Depok, Indonesia — 1 August 2024 — The Faculty of Medicine Universitas Indonesia (FMUI) and the University of Oxford are excited to announce the successful completion of a phase 2 [clinical trial](#) for new malaria vaccines made by Sanaria Inc. This is the first malaria vaccine trial ever conducted in Indonesia and the first in Asia-Pacific in over 30 years.

The trial, which officially ended on 27 May 2024, was conducted in collaboration with the Indonesian Army Health Centre (PUSKESAD) and the Eijkman Molecular Biology Research Centre of the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) and involved 345 Indonesian soldiers from Battalion 132, Bangkinang, Riau Province, who voluntarily participated in the study.

These soldiers travelled from Bangkinang, a malaria-free zone, to Keerom District in Papua Province, a region where malaria is endemic. The goal was to observe how vaccination would work in individuals who had never been infected with malaria before entering a high-risk malaria area. The soldiers were then divided into two groups: those receiving the vaccination and those receiving a placebo injection.

"This study is unique because it involved a malaria-naive population travelling to an endemic region. By vaccinating soldiers who had never been exposed to malaria before they travelled to a high-risk area, we were able to truly test the effectiveness of these vaccines in a real-world setting," said Prof. Erni J. Nelwan, Principal Investigator of the study from FMUI.

The soldiers were vaccinated between May and September 2022 and then deployed to Keerom District. The research team monitored and treated over 700 malaria cases during their deployment and continued to track the soldiers for six months after they returned, treating over 300 more cases.

The two vaccines tested were created using live malaria parasites, specifically the West African strain, which were weakened using different methods. The parasites in the Sanaria® PfSPZ vaccine were weakened by radiation, while the parasites in the Sanaria® PfSPZ-CVac were weakened by chloroquine given orally to study participants.

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The trial showed that the Sanaria® PfSPZ vaccine was safe and well-tolerated, similar to a saline placebo. The Sanaria® PfSPZ-CVac vaccine also showed good safety and minor side effects. Both vaccines offered protection against malaria caused by the *Plasmodium falciparum* parasite found in Papua, which is different from the strain that composed the vaccine.

Dean of the Faculty of Medicine Universitas Indonesia, Prof. Dr. dr. Ari Fahrial Syam, Sp.PD-KGEH., MMB said, "The phase 2 clinical trial of the malaria vaccine is crucial research in vaccine development. Hopefully, the clinical trial can continue so that the existence of this vaccine can truly benefit efforts to eradicate malaria in Indonesia and the world. FMUI continues to support various clinical trials of OUCRU Indonesia, continuing the cooperation that has been ongoing for the past 13 years."

Along the same lines, Director of OUCRU Indonesia, Prof. J. Kevin Baird, added that malaria is a significant problem globally and in Indonesia. "Our work at OUCRU Indonesia focuses on collaborating with local partners to find effective solutions against infectious diseases that can be adopted around the world. The success of this trial is a testament to the power of these partnerships and a crucial step toward eliminating malaria," he said.

The Medical Officer of Sanaria, Thomas L. Richie, emphasize that cross-strain efficacy is vital for global malaria elimination, as there are a variety of malaria species worldwide. Building on these findings, Sanaria is developing the next-generation vaccine called PfSPZ-LARC2 with the hope of achieving even better results.

The detailed results of the trial will be published after peer-review later this year. This groundbreaking study, funded by the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (USA) and led by Prof. Erni J. Nelwan from FMUI, marks a significant step forward in the fight against malaria.

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Monthly blood sample collection by the IDSPZV1 study team as part of routine monitoring in Papua.

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Notes to Editors

For more information, contact Prof. Erni Juwita Nelwan, Principal Investigator on the trial. Email: erni.juwita@ui.ac.id

Universitas Indonesia

Universitas Indonesia (UI) is a modern, comprehensive, inclusive, multicultural, and humanistic university encompassing a wide range of academic disciplines. UI consistently strives to be a leading research university or academic institution on the global stage. As a research university, UI relentlessly pursues the highest achievements in discovery, development, and dissemination of knowledge regionally and globally.

University of Oxford

Part of the Nuffield Department of Medicine, the University of Oxford Centre for Tropical Medicine & Global Health is involved in major long term collaborative partnerships in Africa and Southeast Asia with research staff working within a range of national research institutions. The center's approach is multidisciplinary, running from community-based research, through epidemiology, clinical research and basic laboratory sciences to health systems, social science and policy-based research.

www.tropicalmedicine.ox.ac.uk

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The Oxford University Clinical Research Unit (OUCRU) is a large-scale clinical and public health research unit with campuses in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi in Viet Nam, Jakarta in Indonesia, and Kathmandu in Nepal. In Vietnam, OUCRU is hosted by the Hospital of Tropical Diseases (HTD) in Ho Chi Minh City, and the National Hospital for Tropical Diseases (NHTD) in Hanoi. OUCRU Indonesia exists in partnership with Universitas Indonesia. As a Wellcome Trust Center in the Asia and Africa Programmes, OUCRU has received considerable support from the Trust since its establishment in 1991.

Our vision is to have local, regional and global impact on health by leading a locally driven research programme on infectious diseases in Southeast Asia.

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