



Challenges and opportunities to formulate and stabilize vaccine candidates targeted for use in LMICs

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Vaccine Analytics and Formulation Center (VAFC)

2022 Vaccine Technology VII Meeting
Sitges, Spain (Virtual Presentation)
June 16, 2022

Outline of Presentation

Introduction

- Vaccine Analytics and Formulation Center (VAFC)
- Different Types of Vaccine Platforms
- Challenges to Formulate and Stabilize Vaccine Platforms

Three Vaccine Formulation Case Studies with Candidates for use in LMICs



Lawrence, KS
45 min
outside of KC



Our focus is the “science of CMC development”

1. *Facilitate translational medicine*

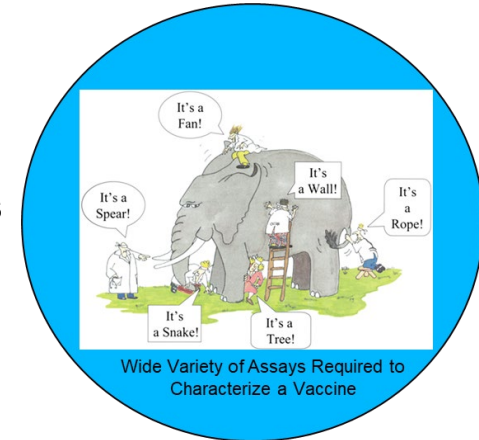
- Vaccine and biotherapeutic drug candidates into early and late-stage clinical trials
- Emphasis on use in low- and middle- income countries (LMICs)

2. *Analytical and Formulation Expertise*

Analytical characterization



- Developability assessments
- Antigen-Adjuvant interactions
- Formulation development
- Stability profiles
- Comparability studies



3. *Publish and openly communicate results*

4. *Train and employ biopharma/vaccine CMC scientists*

Our KU VAFC Team

Executive Director, co-PI
VAFC co-founder

Dr. Sangeeta Joshi



7 staff members have left VAFC for
great industry jobs in past 6m!

We are hiring post-docs looking
for new opportunities to learn
vaccine development!

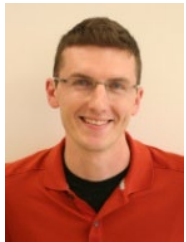
Distinguished Professor, PI
VAFC co-founder

Dr. David Volkin



Senior Scientists

Dr. Ozan Kumru Dr. John Hickey Dr. Prashant Kumar



Post Docs, Research Associates, Visiting Scientists

Dr. David Holland Dr. Nitya Sharma Dr. Kathryn Secrist Dr. Atsushi Hamana



Graduate Students

Kaushal Jerajani Sakshi Bajoria Layla Barreto



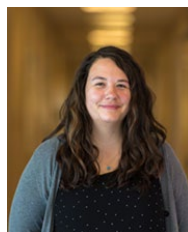
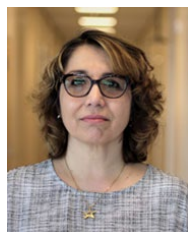
Administrative Staff

Emily Thomas-Dykes Melinda Fish



Research Assistants

Sara Birdjandi Dara Ogun Brandy Dotson

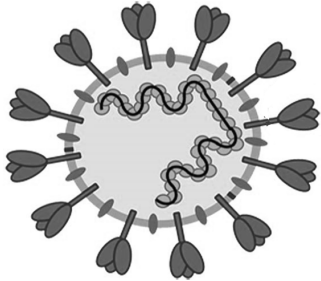


Ria Caringal Michael Wang Poorva Tasker



Overview of Viral Vaccine Platforms (e.g., COVID-19 Vaccines and Candidates)

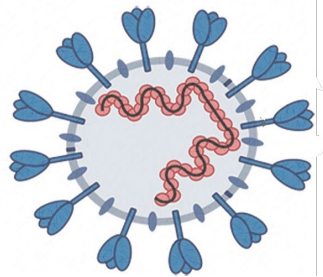
sinovac



Whole-inactivated virus

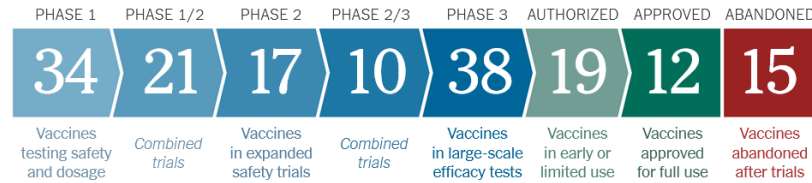
BHARAT BIOTECH

CODAGENIX INC.



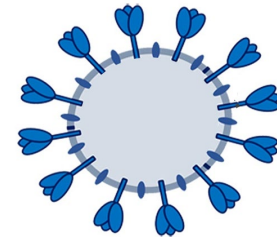
Live-attenuated virus

Worldwide COVID-19 Vaccines and Candidates (120 in clinical trials)



NOVAVAX
Creating Tomorrow's Vaccines Today

Virus-like particles



medicago

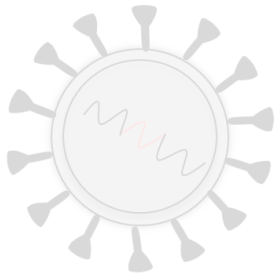
Protein subunit



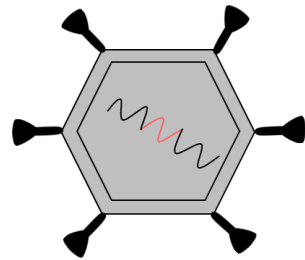
Biological E. Limited
Celebrating Life Every Day

BAYLOR UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
AstraZeneca



Replicating viral vector



Non-replicating viral vector

Johnson & Johnson

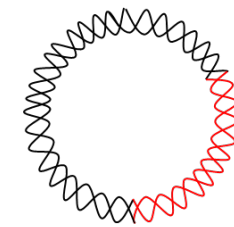


BIONTECH



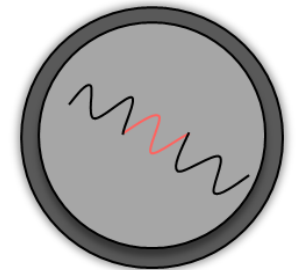
NIH National Institutes of Health
Turning Discovery Into Health

INOVIO
POWERING DNA MEDICINES™



DNA-based

moderna



RNA-based

Bringing a New Vaccine Antigen into Clinical Trials Requires Formulation

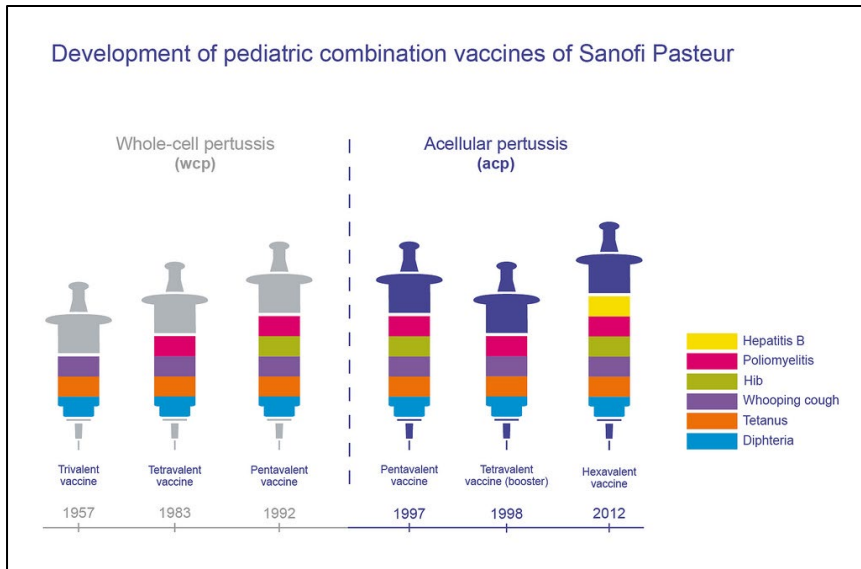
“Turning Biomolecules and Microorganisms into Medicines”

- **Vaccine antigen** at the appropriate dose
- **Adjuvants** to enhance desired immune responses
- **Excipients** to ensure stability, solubility and tonicity
- **Primary container** (vial or prefilled syringe) to hold the vaccine/adjuvant/excipient mixture
- **Delivery** device for administration (IM/subQ, ID, oral, nasal)
- Fill-finish **Manufacturing process** (liquid, lyo)
- Develop **Analytical assays** and specifications
- Define **Vaccine stability profile**: storage conditions, shelf life, and administration procedures



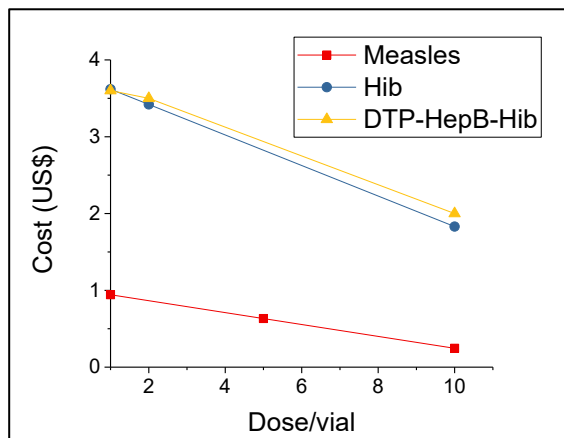
Formulation Development can Lower Costs and Increase Vaccine Coverage for use in LMICs

Combination Vaccines



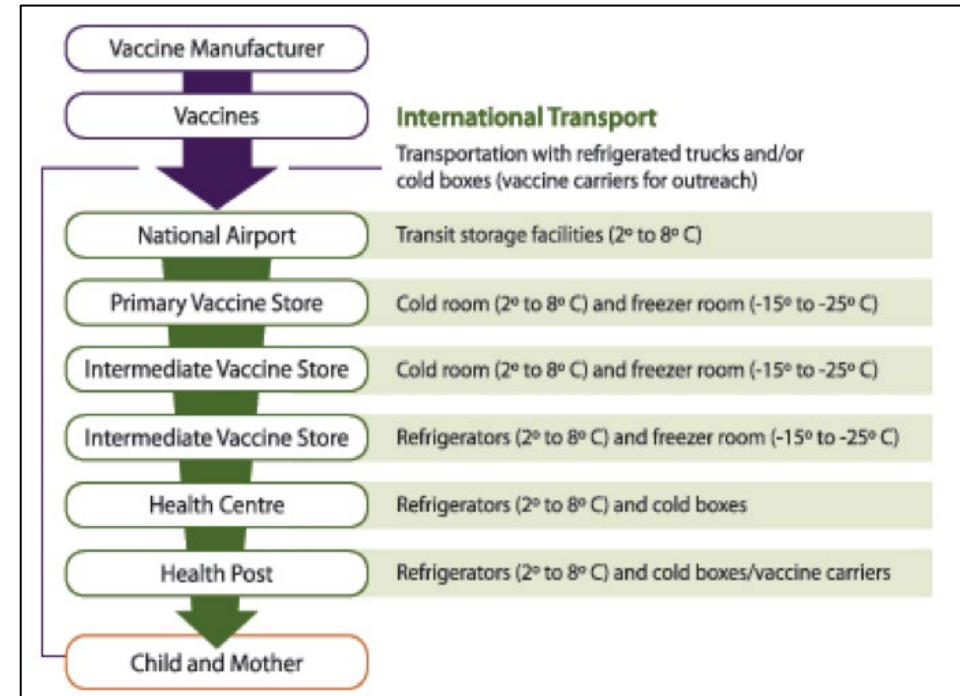
More vaccine antigens per container

Multidose Vaccines



More vaccine doses per container

Vaccine Cold Chain



Improve Stability Across the Cold Chain

The Last Mile:



Outline of Presentation

Introduction

Formulation Case Studies with Vaccine Candidates for use in LMICs:

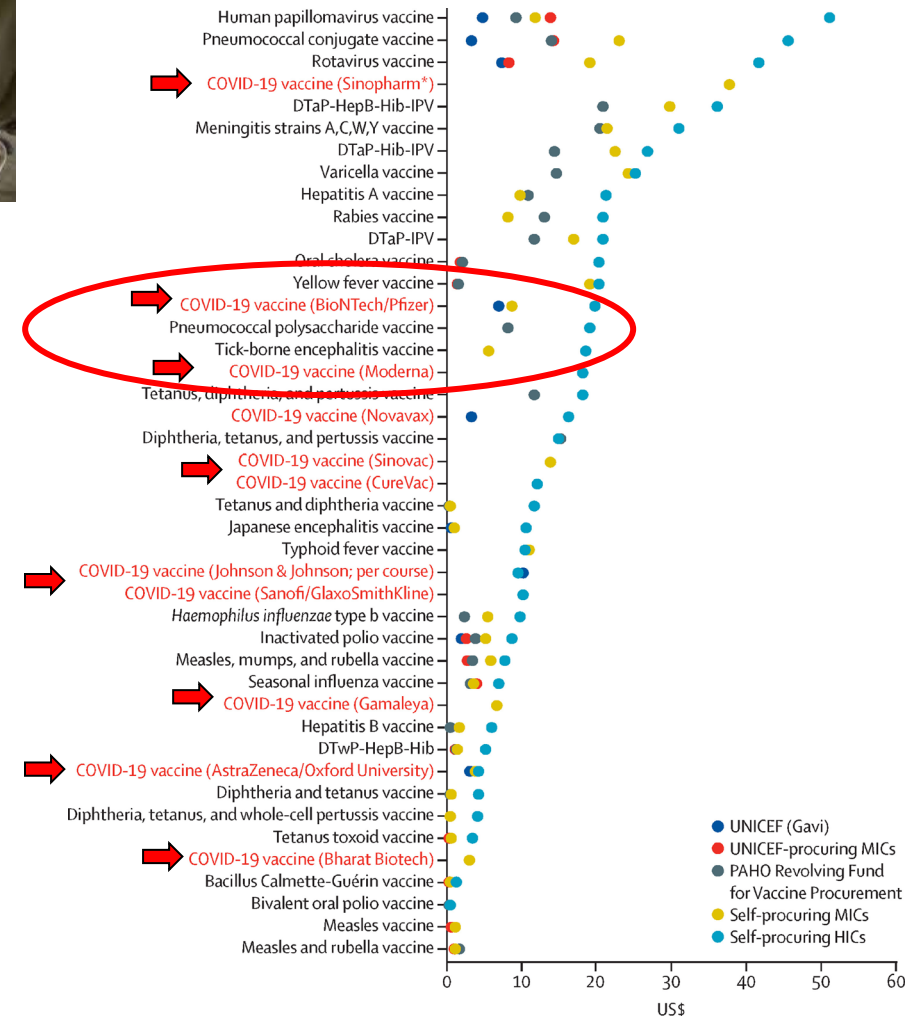
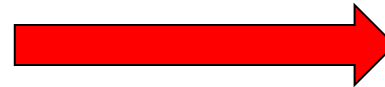
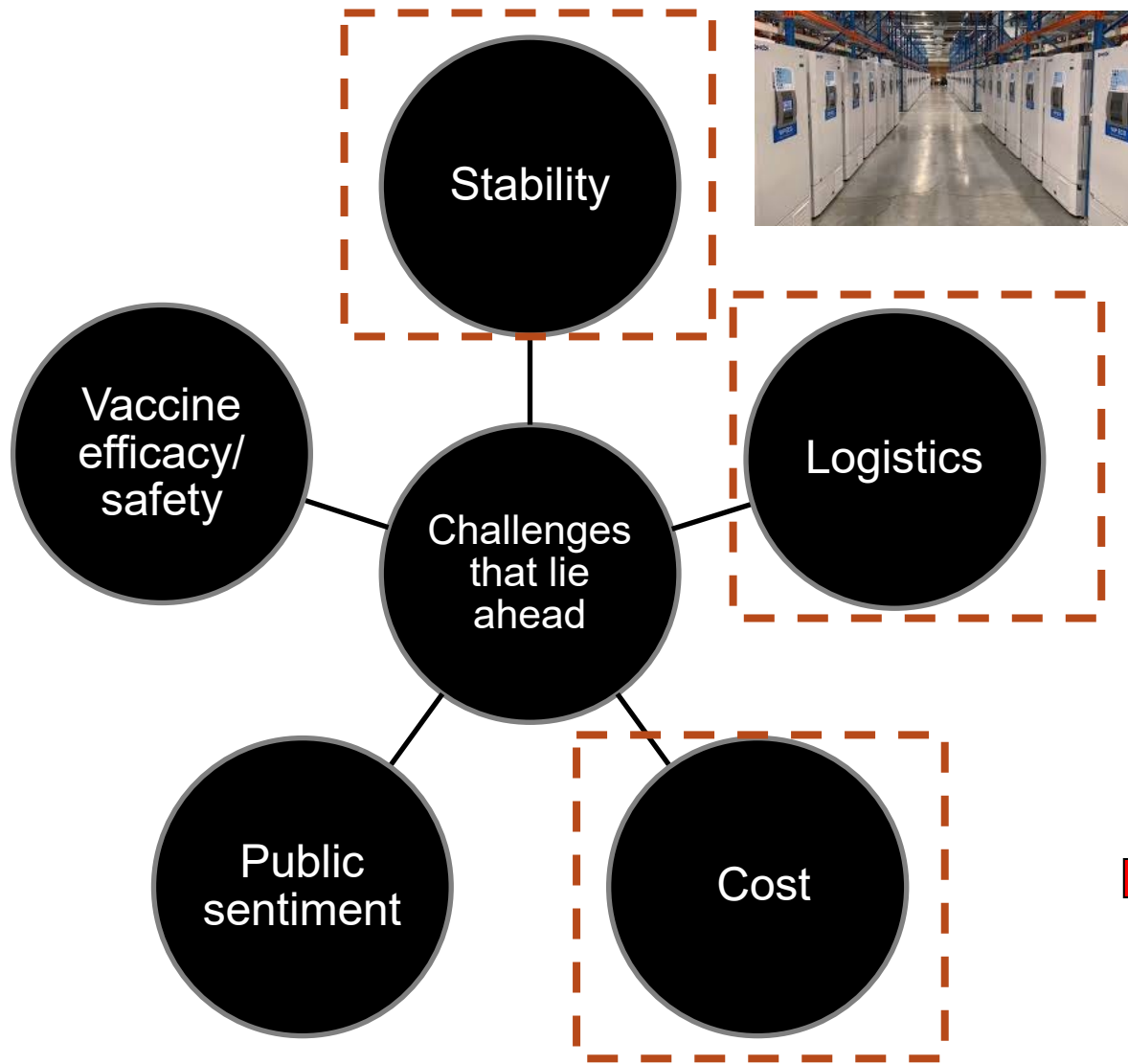
COVID-19 vaccine candidate

1. *RBD subunit with adjuvants (RBD-J, Alum, CpG)*

Rotavirus vaccine candidates

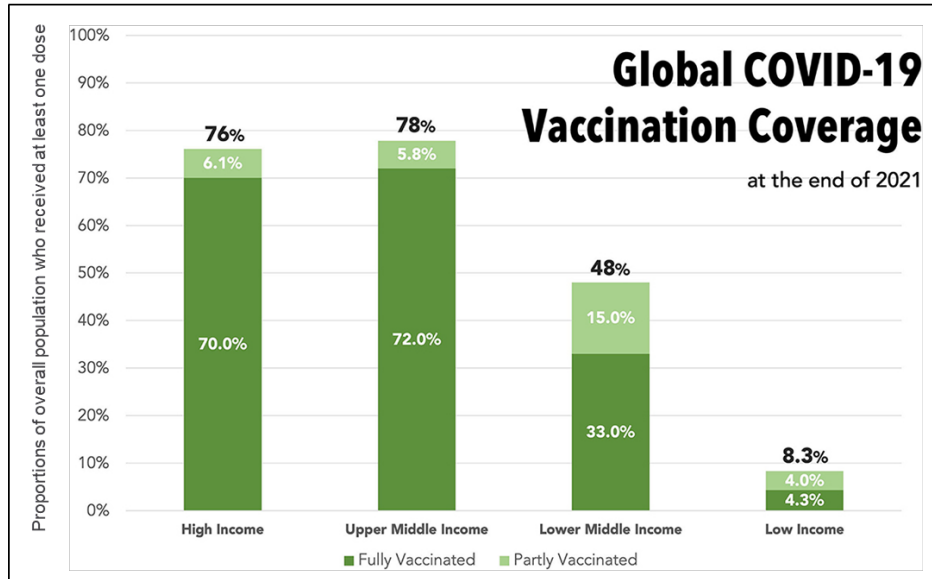
2. *Live attenuated rotavirus (RV3-BB)*
3. *Trivalent recombinant subunit (t-NRRV)*

COVID-19 vaccine approval is only the first step for worldwide coverage... (e.g., stability, logistics and costs limit availability in LMICs)



Vaccine Formulation Case Study #1:

New COVID-19 Vaccine Candidates Targeted for Use in Low- and Middle- Income Countries (LMICs)



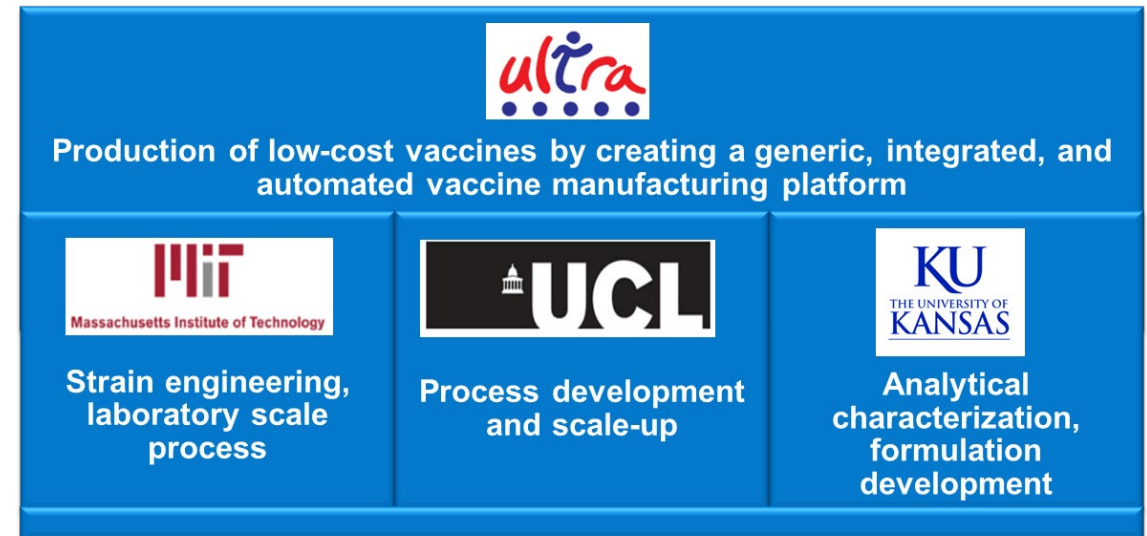
To meet global demand and to ensure access to LMICs:

- Affordable (low-cost production)
- Easily-scalable
- Sufficient stability at refrigerated or ambient temperatures
- Effectively immunogenic

Subunit vaccine formulated with adjuvants as an attractive approach to meet these goals

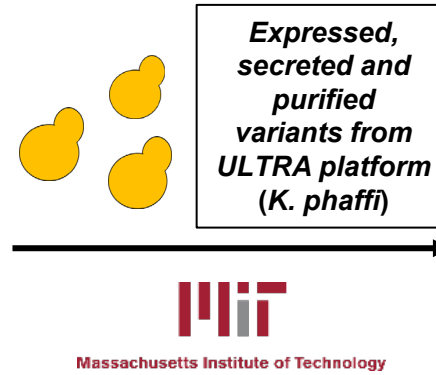
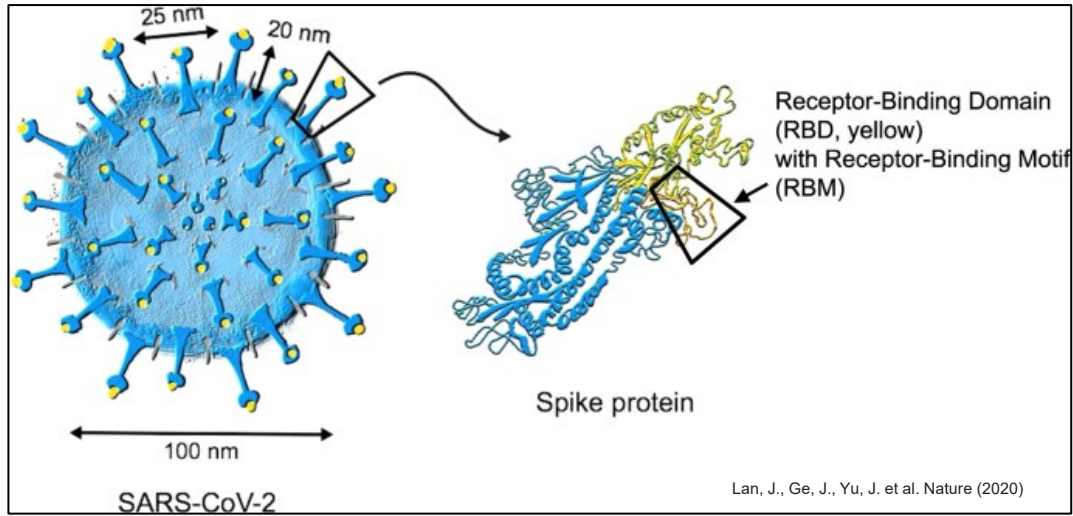
- “ULTRA”-low cost vaccine manufacturing
- Funded by BMGF Grand challenge grant
- Goal: To reduce cost of vaccine manufacturing of recombinant protein antigens to \$.015/dose through the integrated automation of a continuous manufacturing process

BILL & MELINDA
GATES foundation



- Recombinant protein antigens evaluated:
 - NRRV antigens (rotavirus vaccine candidate)
 - RBD antigens (Covid-19 vaccine candidate)

Recombinant RBD variant as subunit COVID-19 vaccine candidate

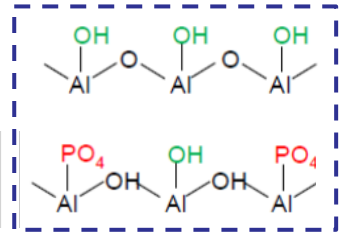


	Position															
	1	13	121	122	123	124	125	126	158	159	160					
SARS CoV	N	.	N	.	.	Y	K	Y	R	Y	L	.	.	C	Y	W
SARS CoV-2	N	.	N	.	.	Y	L	Y	R	L	F	.	.	C	Y	F
RBD	N	.	Q	.	.	Y	L	Y	R	L	F	.	.	C	Y	F
variants expressed in <i>K. phaffii</i>	del	.	Q	.	.	Y	L	Y	R	L	F	.	.	C	Y	F
	del	.	N	.	.	Y	L	Y	R	L	F	.	.	C	Y	F
	del	.	N	.	.	Y	K	Y	R	L	F	.	.	C	Y	W

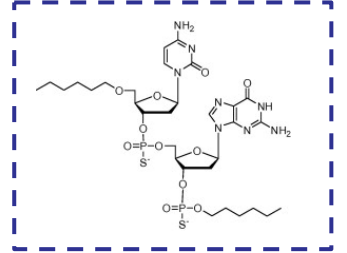
Developability Assessments

Structural attribute	Method
Protein concentration, purity and aggregation	UV-Vis Spectroscopy SDS PAGE
Size/ Aggregation	Size Exclusion Chromatography
Primary structure and post-translational modifications	Intact MS N-glycan analysis
Higher-order structure	Circular Dichroism (CD) Intrinsic fluorescence spectroscopy Differential Scanning Calorimetry (DSC)
Ligand binding	Bio-layer Interferometry (BLI)

Aluminum salt adjuvants



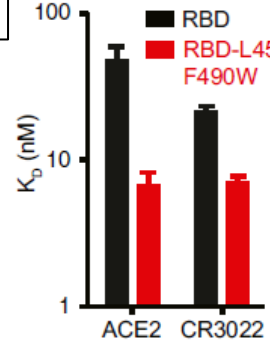
CpG 1018



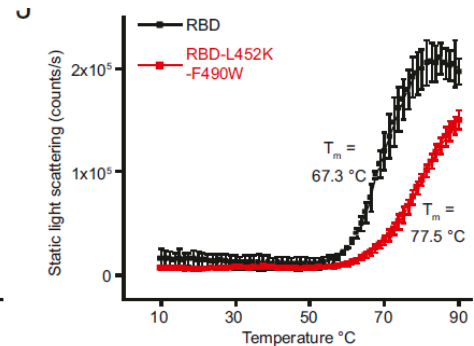
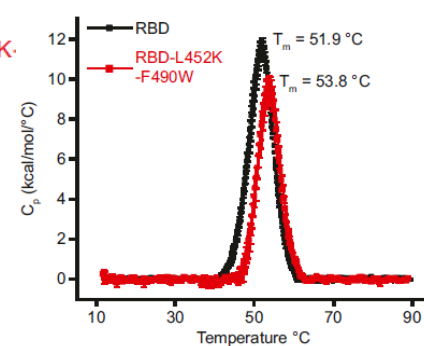
Preclinical Animal Studies

Dalvie et al., Proc Natl Acad Sci, 118 (38) (2021)

Formulated with adjuvants

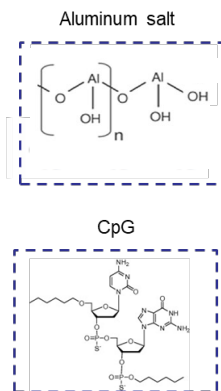
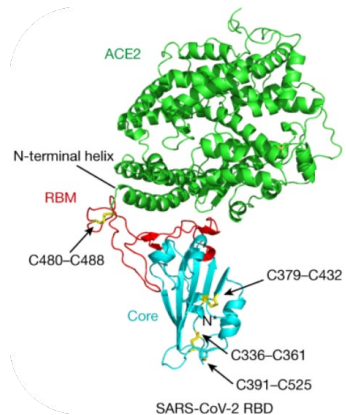


Down-selected: RBD-L452K-F490W or RBD-J



RBD-J Adjuvanted Formulations:

Inter-relationships between Antigen-Adjuvant Interactions, Immunogenicity and Stability

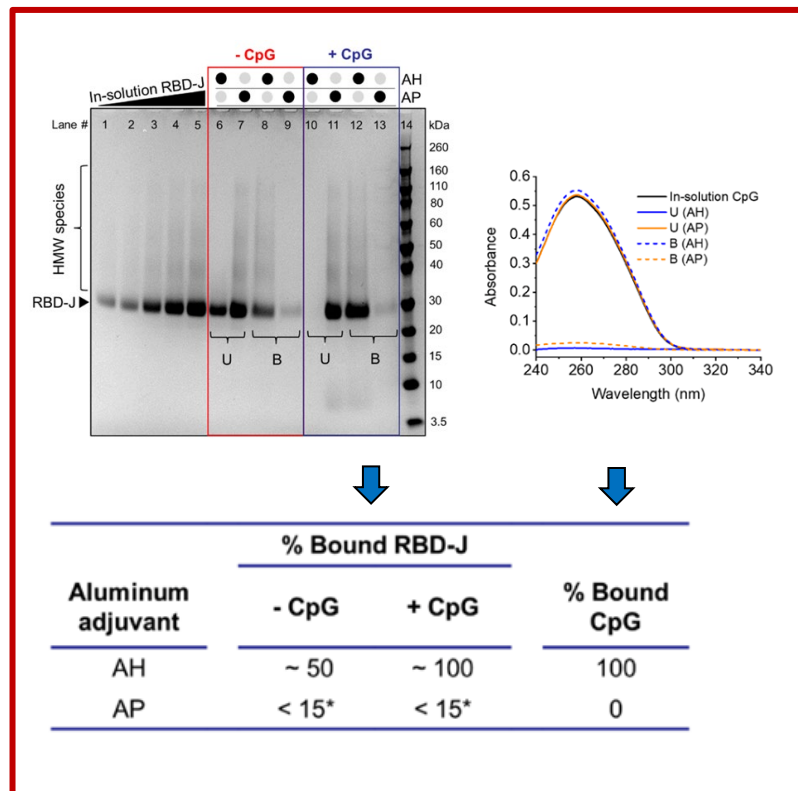


Antigen-Adjuvant Interactions

- SDS PAGE
- UV visible spectroscopy

In vivo immunogenicity

In vitro storage stability



Formulation	Adjuvant	% Bound to aluminum adjuvant	
		RBD-J	CpG 1018
F1	AH	~ 50	-
F2	AH	~ 100	-
F3	AH+CpG	~ 100	100
F4	AP	< 15	-
F5	AP+CpG	< 15	0
F6	CpG	-	-
F7	No adjuvant	-	-

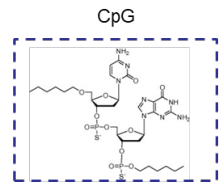
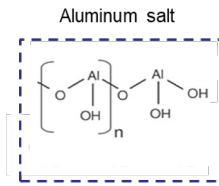
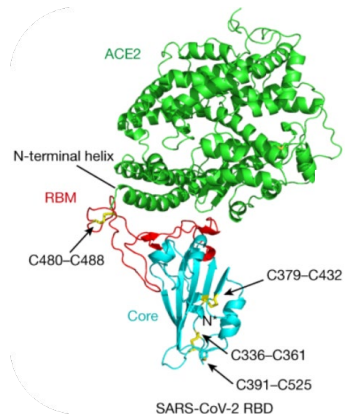
Prepared different adjuvanted RBD-J formulations

- AH vs AP
- CpG vs no CpG
- Bound vs unbound

- RBD-J partially binds AH
- RBD-J 100% AH bound with CpG
- RBD-J does not bind AP

RBD-J Adjuvanted Formulations:

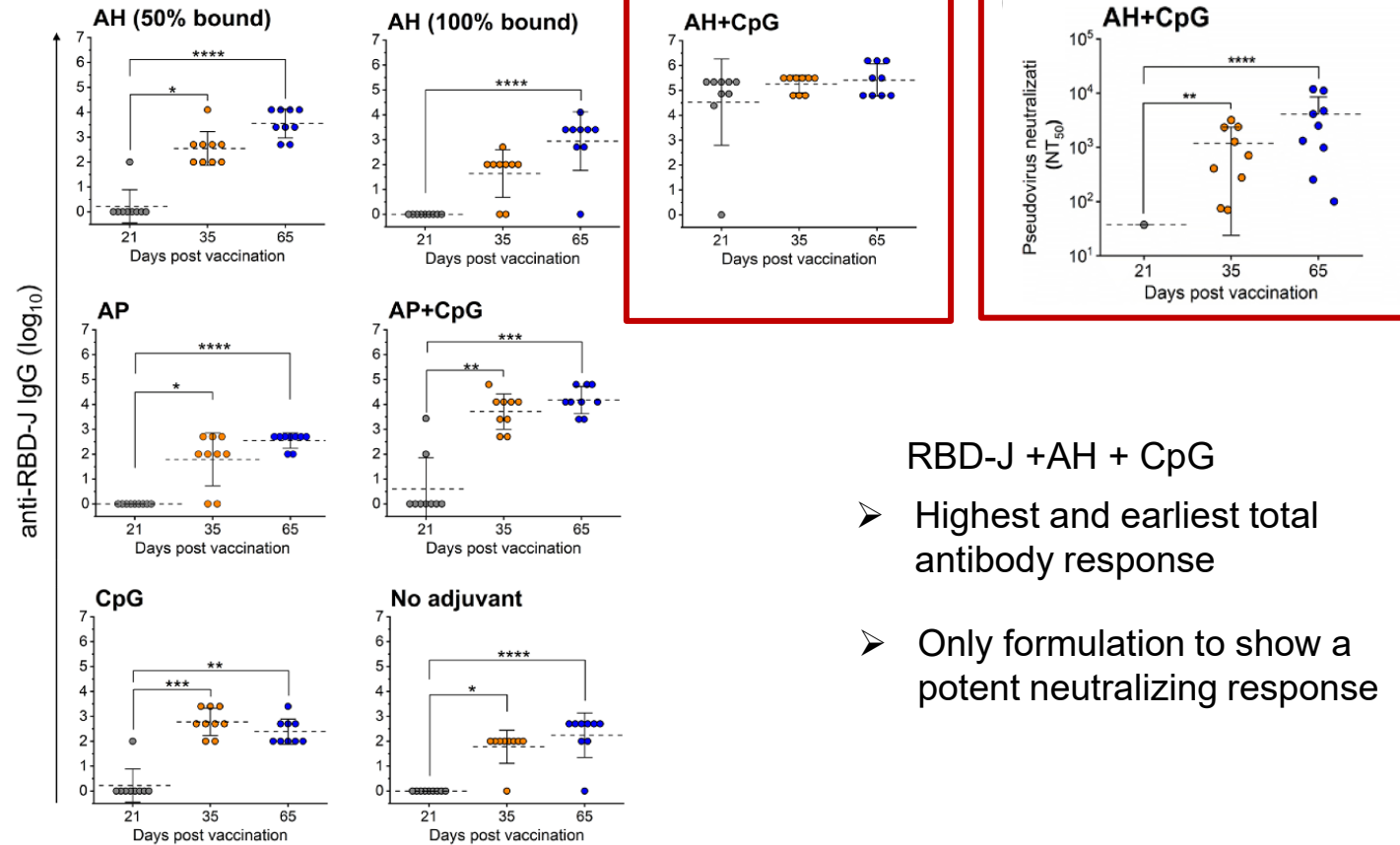
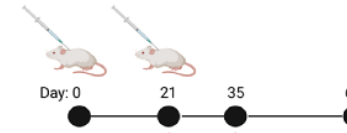
Inter-relationships between Antigen-Adjuvant Interactions, Immunogenicity and Stability



Antigen-Adjuvant Interactions

Total antibody

Neutralizing antibody



- RBD-J +AH + CpG
 - Highest and earliest total antibody response
 - Only formulation to show a potent neutralizing response

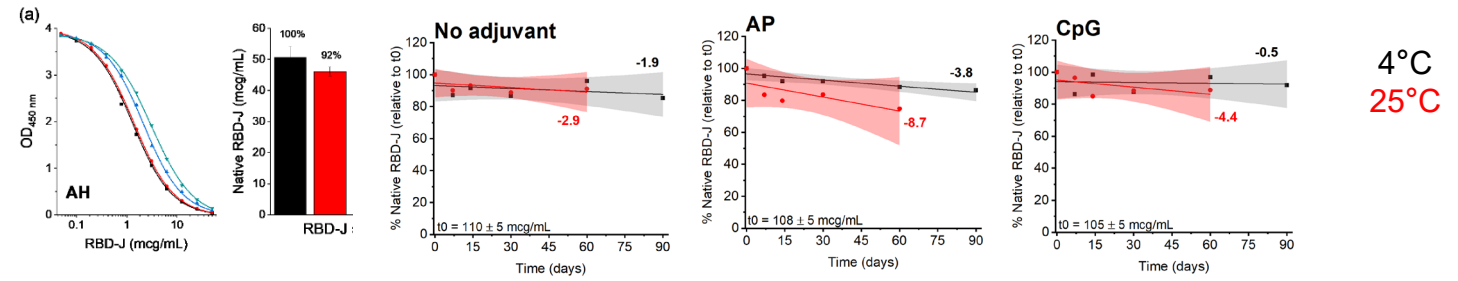
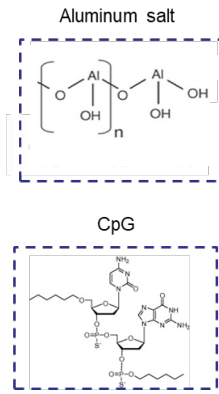
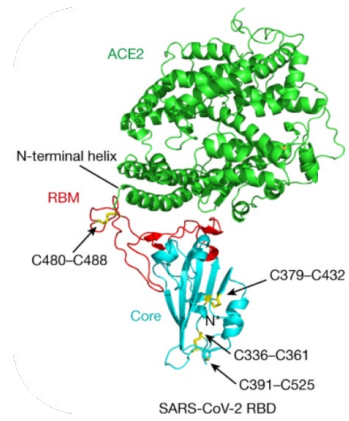
In vivo Immunogenicity

- Mouse studies
- Total antibodies
- Neutralizing antibodies

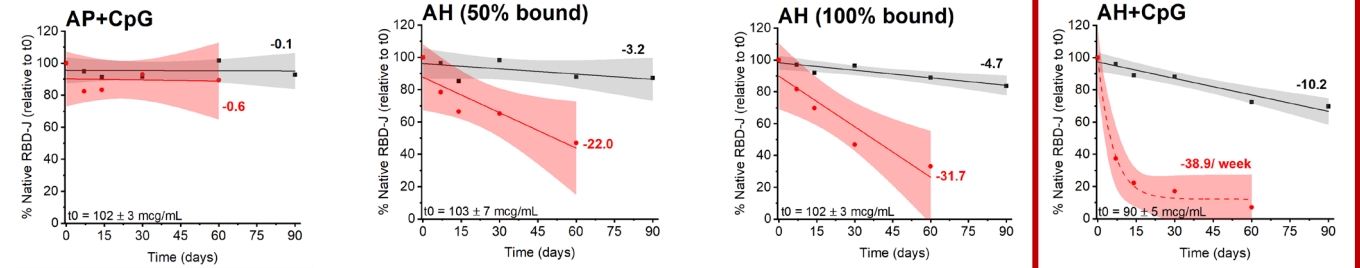
In vitro Storage Stability

RBD-J Adjuvanted Formulations:

Inter-relationships between Antigen-Adjuvant Interactions, Immunogenicity and Stability



Antigen-Adjuvant Interactions



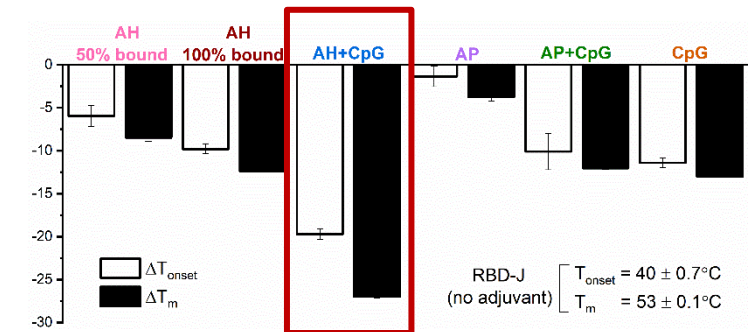
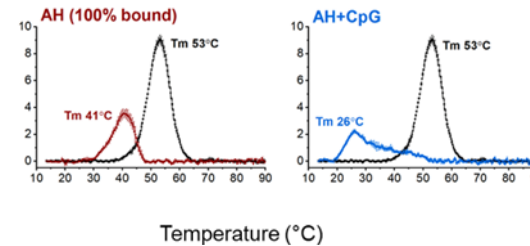
RBD-J +AH + CpG

- Least stable formulation during storage
- Lowest conformational stability

In vivo Immunogenicity

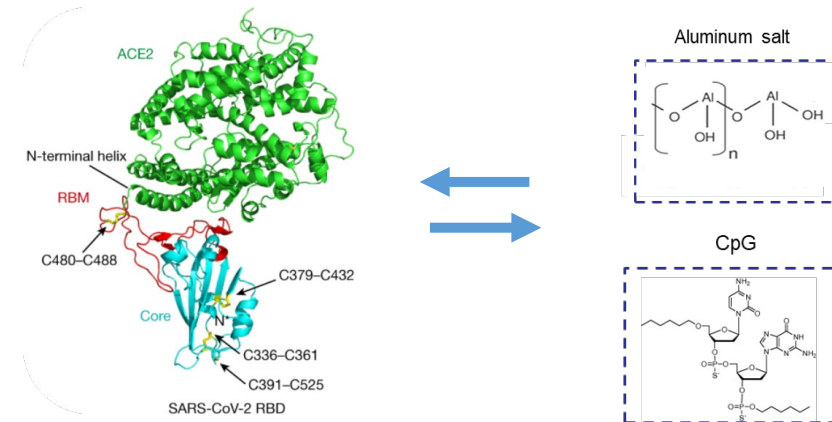
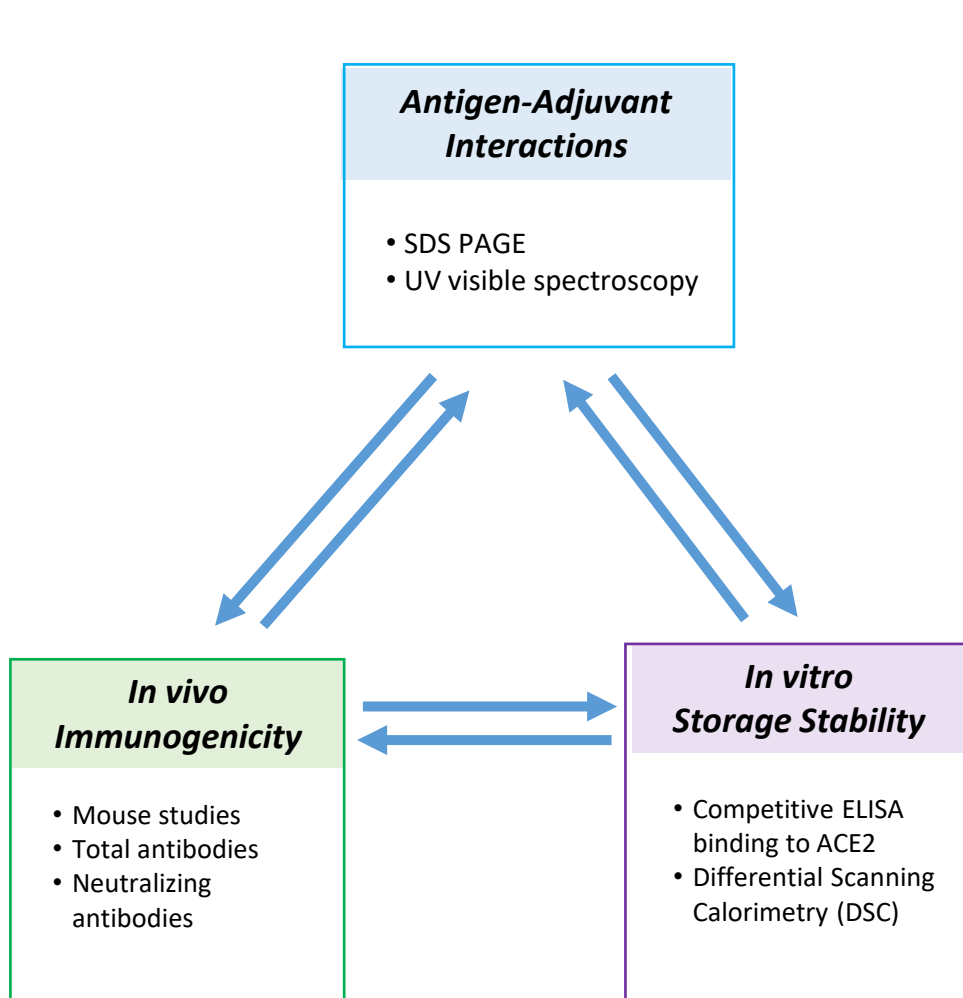
In vitro Storage Stability

- Competitive ELISA binding to ACE2
- Differential Scanning Calorimetry (DSC)



RBD-J Adjuvanted Formulations:

Summary of Inter-relationships between Antigen-Adjuvant Interactions, Immunogenicity and Stability



- RBD-J formulations can be rationally designed to vary interactions between antigen-adjuvants and adjuvants-adjuvants
- Nature of these inter-relationships is expected to be antigen specific (“case-by-case”), even for different variants of RBD!
- Optimizing these formulation variables is key to successfully develop efficacious and stable adjuvanted subunit vaccine candidates

Outline of Presentation

Introduction

Formulation Case Studies with Vaccine Candidates for use in LMICs:

COVID-19 vaccine candidate

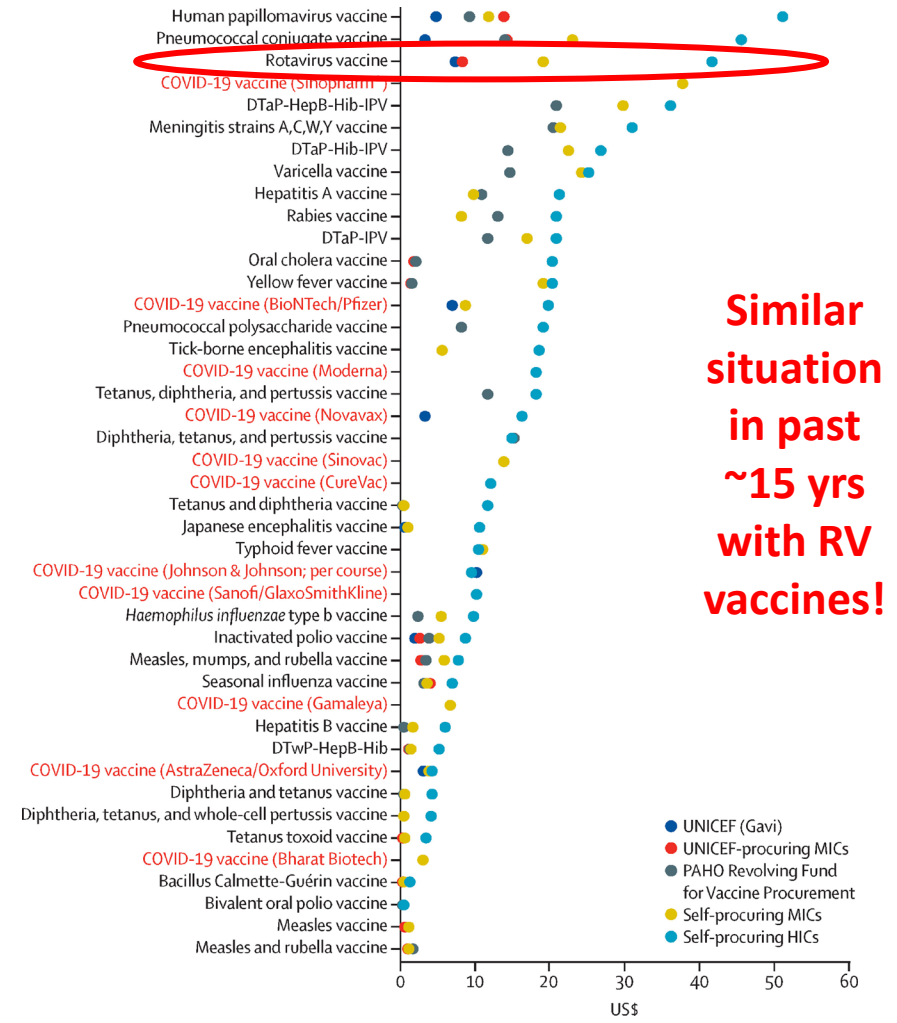
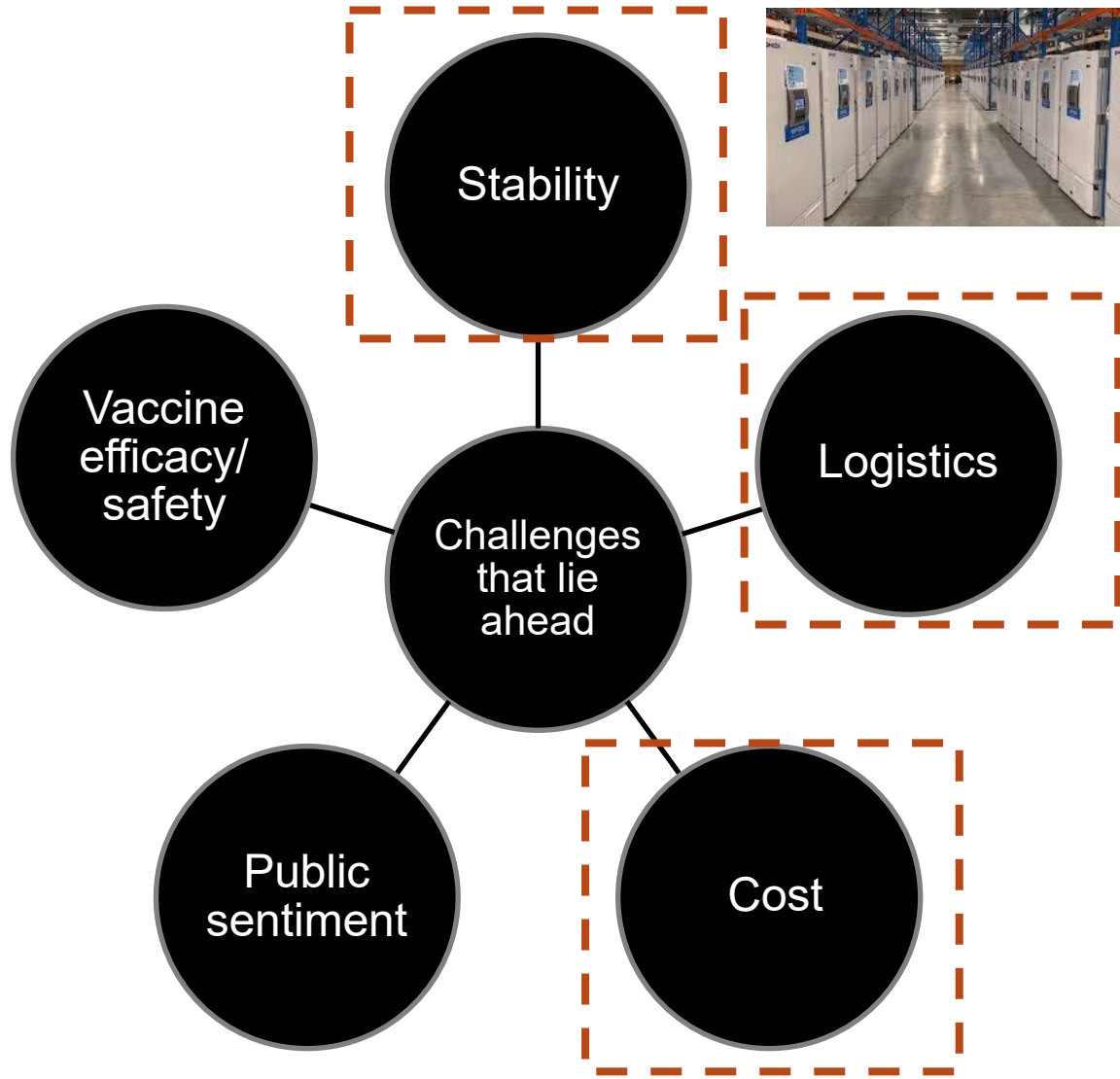
1. *RBD subunit with adjuvants (RBD-J, Alum, CpG)*

Rotavirus vaccine candidates

2. *Live attenuated rotavirus (RV3-BB)*
3. *Trivalent recombinant subunit (t-NRRV)*

Vaccine approval is only the first step for worldwide coverage...

(e.g., stability, logistics and costs limit availability in LMICs)



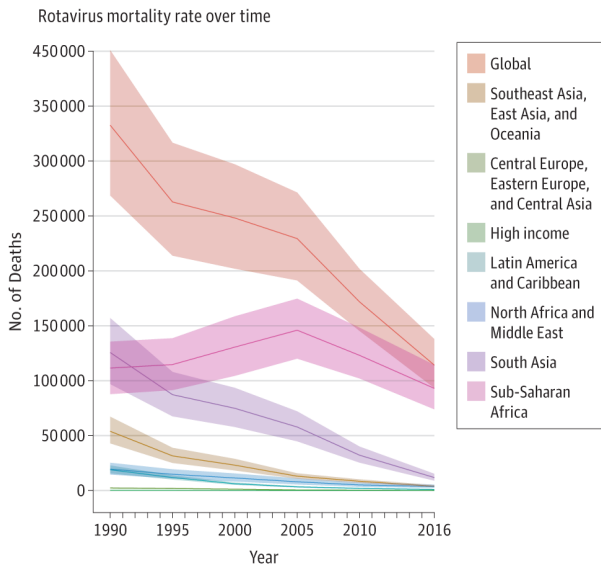
Rotavirus Vaccines

RotaTeq: 2006, pentavalent rotavirus vaccine (RV5)

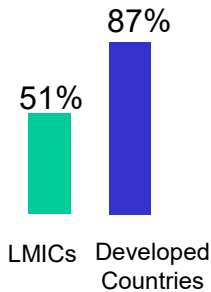
Rotarix: 2008, monovalent rotavirus vaccine (RV1)

In 2018, two additional WHO prequalified RV vaccines available from Indian vaccine manufacturers

live attenuated rotavirus strain + Oral delivery of liquid formulation



Vaccine efficacy



Low Global Coverage

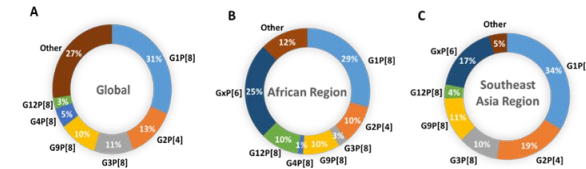


~30%

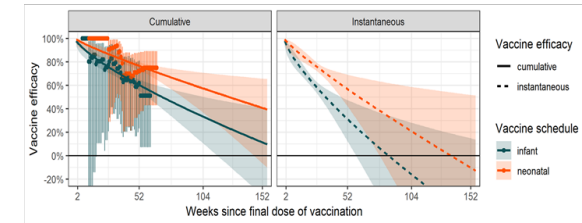
High cost + limited manufacturing capacity

Need for New Rotavirus Vaccines in LMICs

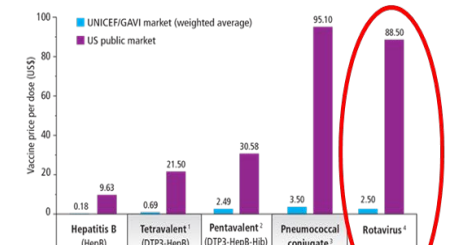
1. Improve vaccine efficacy by broader serotype coverage against prevalent strains in LMICs



2. Improved duration of protective response and reduce risk of intussusception



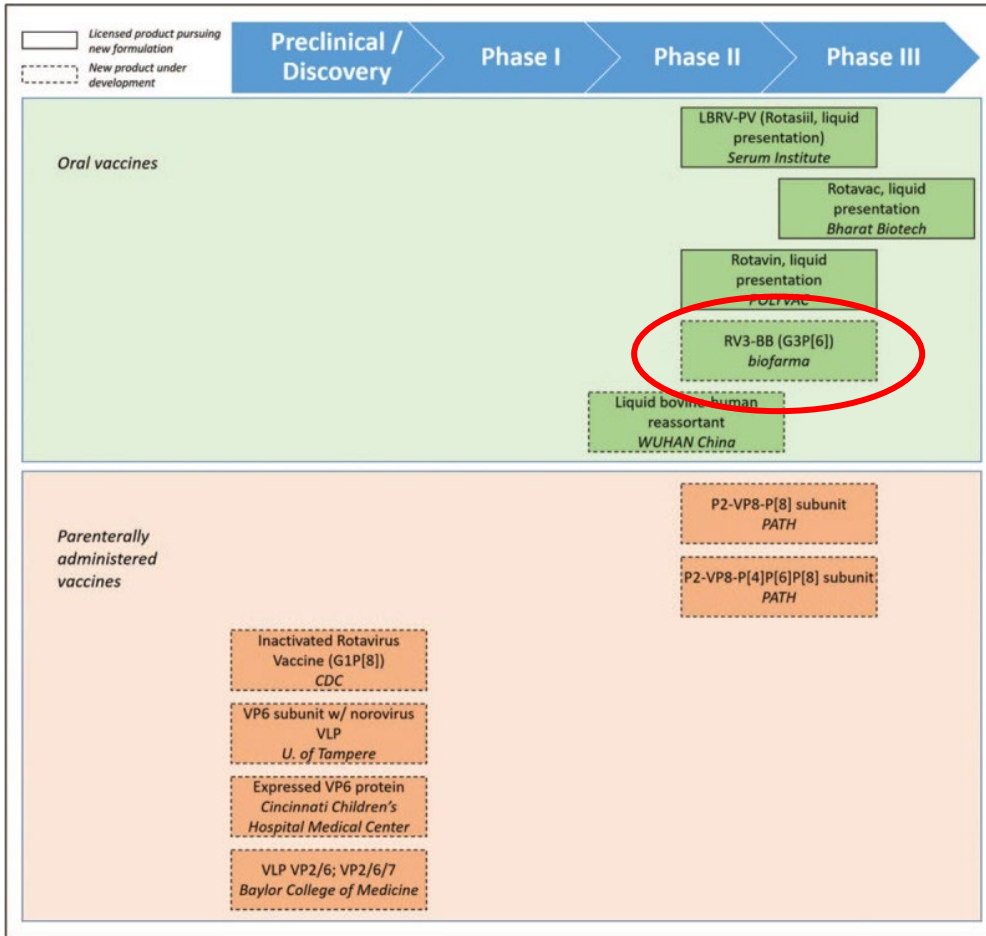
3. Further reduce RV vaccine prices (<\$3.50 for three doses) by lowering production costs and implementing low-cost, thermostable formulations



¹ The combination procured by UNICEF is not provided in the US markets - US prices refer to the sum of a DTap (Diphtheria-Tetanus-Acellular Pertussis) vaccine and a HepB monovalent vaccine.
² The combination procured by UNICEF is not provided in the US markets - US prices refer to the sum of a DTap vaccine, a HepB monovalent vaccine and a Hib vaccine.
³ 13-valent vaccine (US markets) and full price cap under the AMC agreement (UNICEF/GAVI market).
⁴ Refers to GSK product procured by GAVI as of 2012.

Vaccine Formulation Case Study #2:

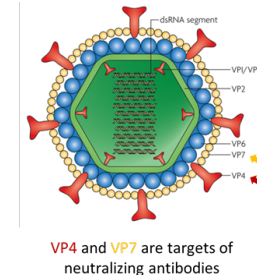
New Rotavirus Vaccine Candidates Targeted for Use in Low- and Middle- Income Countries (LMICs)



Curr Opin Inf Dis 32, 435-44 (2019)

Case study #2

- 70 nm viral particle
- inner core contains 11 double stranded RNA segments,
- internal capsid and
- outer capsid with 60 spikes between 10-12 nm length

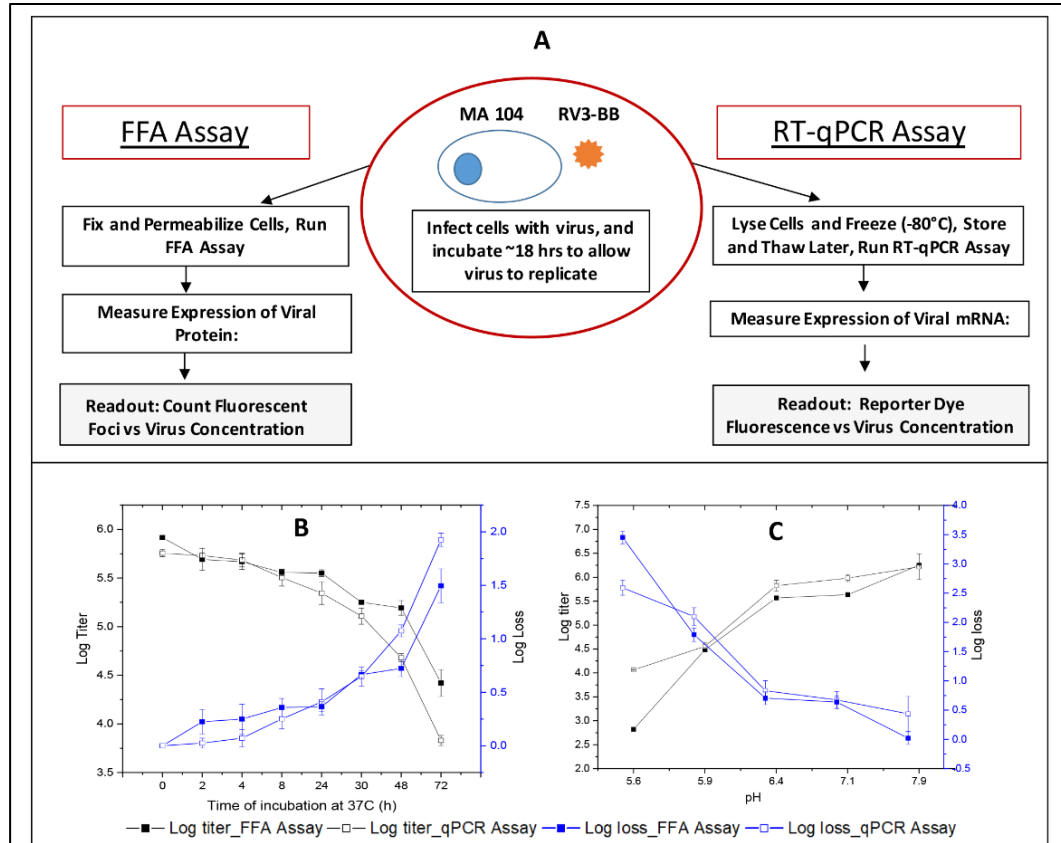


Live, attenuated virus formulated as 2-8°C stable liquid for oral delivery

<p>RV3-BB rotavirus strain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discovered natural, attenuated strain • Developed RV3-BB vaccine to proof-of-concept (Phase IIB) • Owns vaccine IP (Non-exclusively licensed IP to BioFarma) 	<p>Process development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upstream process development • Downstream process development • Analytical development • Scale-up • Tech transfer
<p>Formulation development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stable liquid formulation at 2-8 °C • Oral delivery without need for preneutralization of gastric acid 	<p>Market authorization and commercial manufacturing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical Trial Manufacturing for Phase 1, 2 and 3 • Market Authorization • Commercial Manufacturing

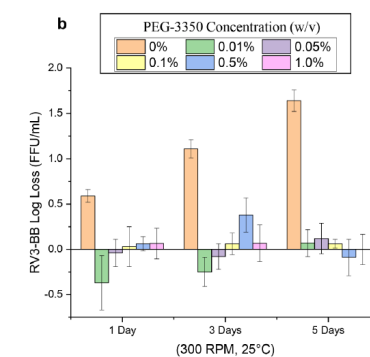
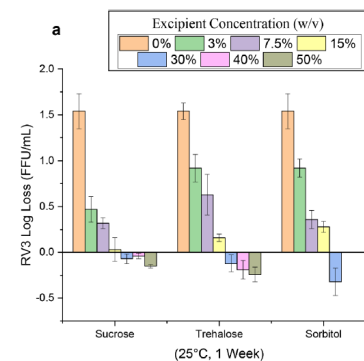
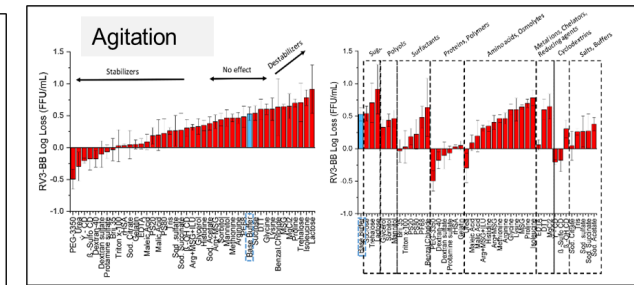
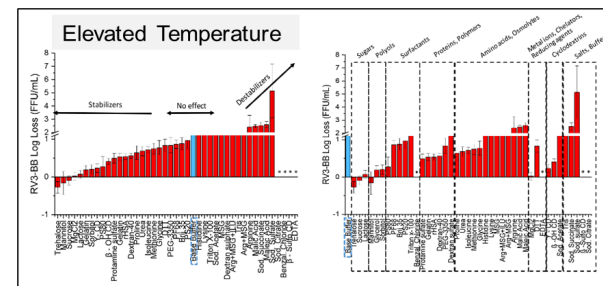
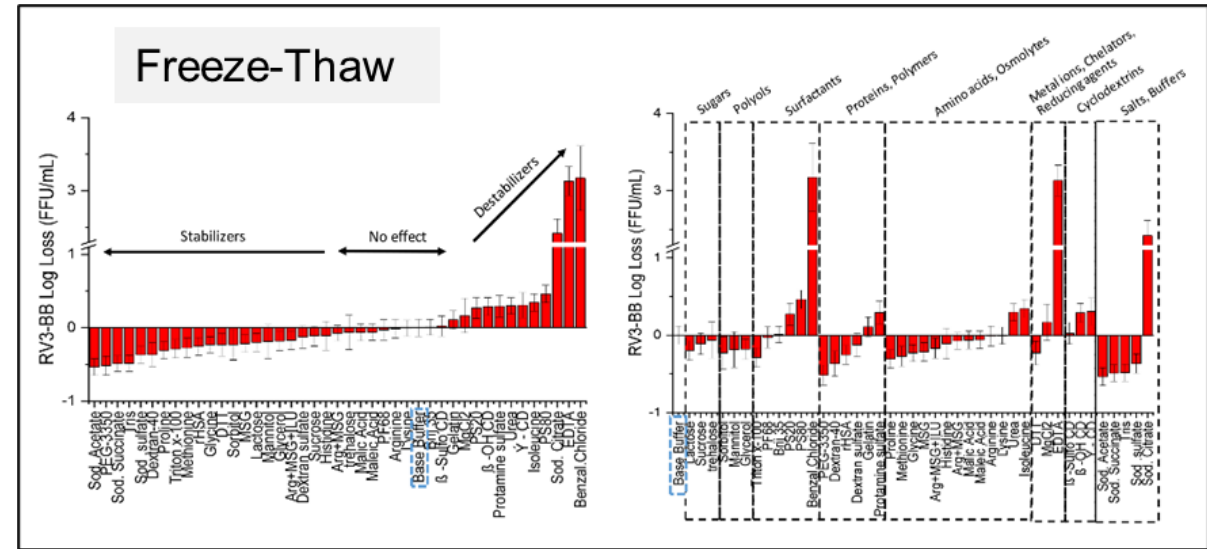
Funding from:
BILL & MELINDA GATES foundation

Implementation of a high-throughput RT-qPCR viral infectivity assay to enable RV3-BB formulation work

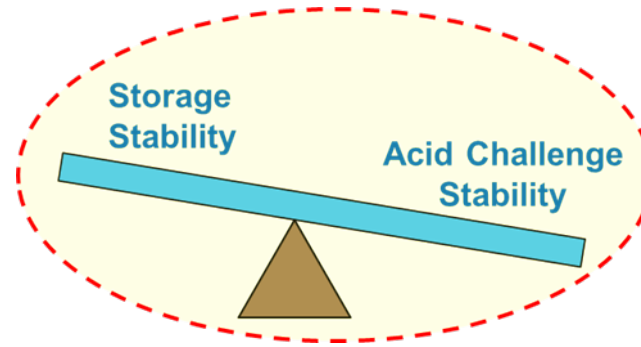


Kumar and Shukla *et al.*, *Human Vaccin Immunother* 17: 2298 (2021)

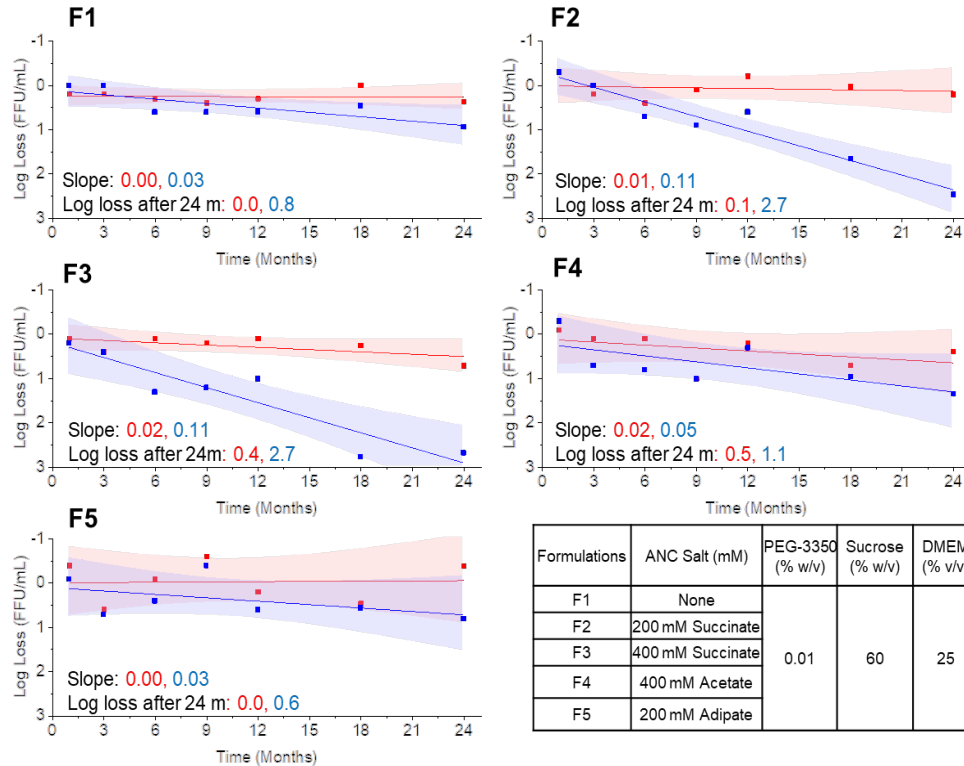
Screening of ~50 Excipients to Stabilize RV3-BB Virus Against Various Stresses (Log loss of titers using RT-qPCR assay)



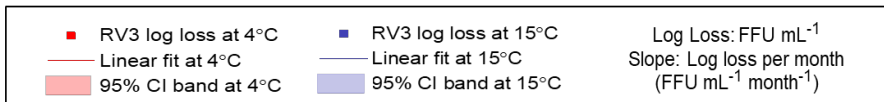
Candidate RV3-BB formulations demonstrate excellent storage stability



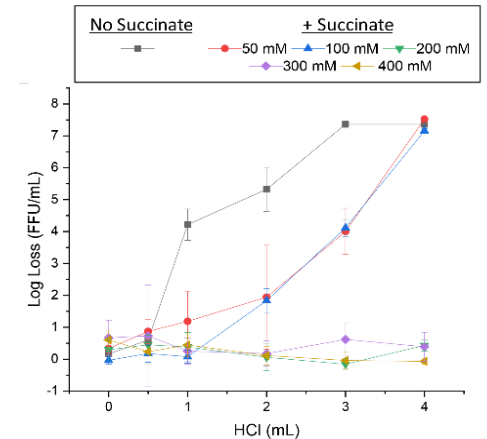
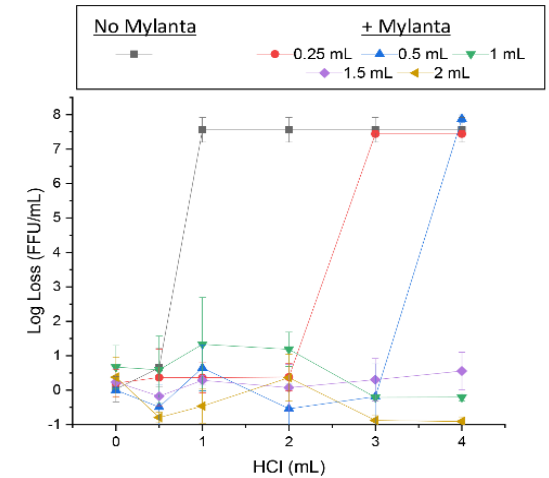
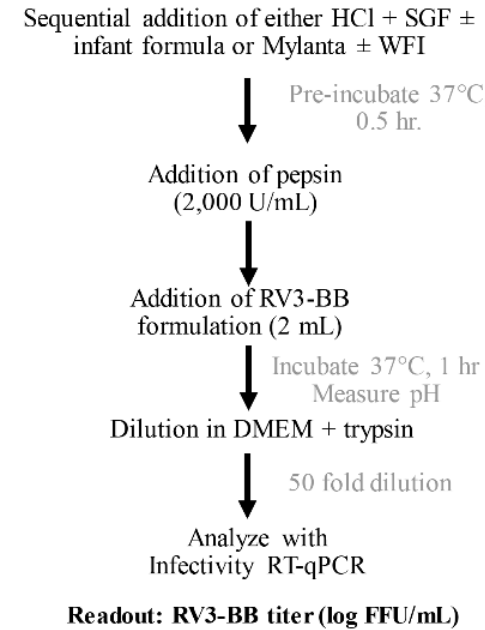
in vitro digestion models suggest candidate formulations protect RV3-BB during *in vivo* oral delivery



Formulations	ANC Salt (mM)	PEG-3350 (% w/v)	Sucrose (% w/v)	DMEM (% v/v)
F1	None	0.01	60	25
F2	200 mM Succinate			
F3	400 mM Succinate			
F4	400 mM Acetate			
F5	200 mM Adipate			

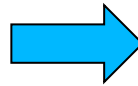
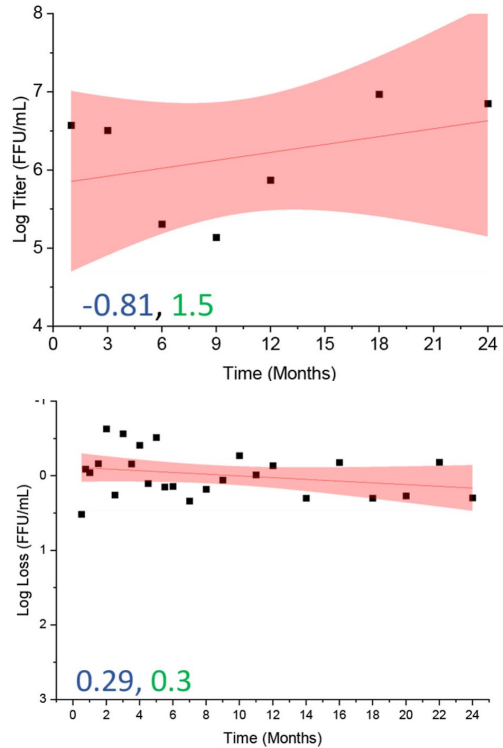


(B) Sequential Addition Model

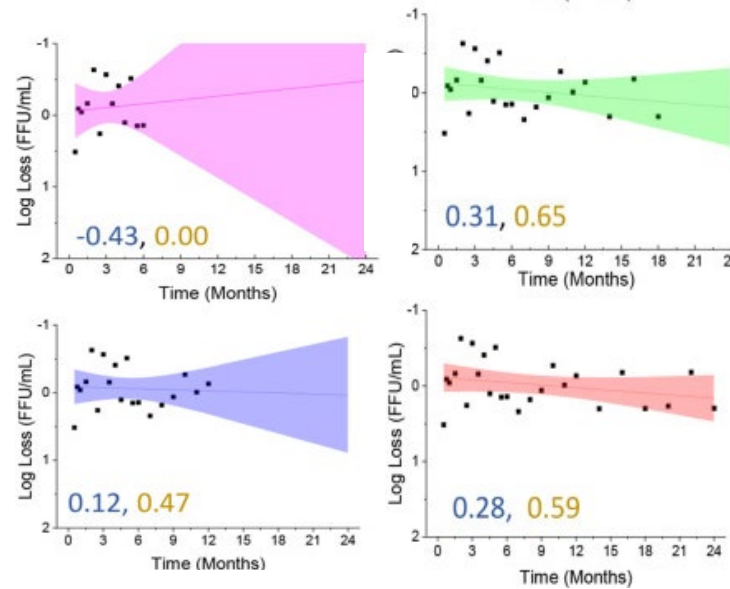


“Lessons Learned” from RV3-BB Work: Enable More Rapid Formulation Development of Live Virus Vaccine Candidates

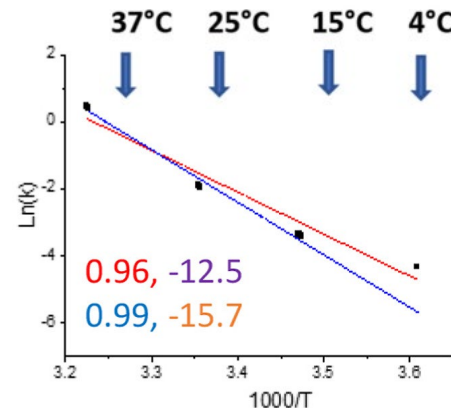
Improved experimental set-up



Extrapolation of real-time 2-8°C stability data



Arrhenius extrapolations of accelerated stability data



Pullagurra and Kumar *et al.*, *Biologicals* 75:21 (2022)

Instead of accumulating two-year,
2–8 °C storage stability data

Same rank-ordering of the three
RV3-BB formulations could have
been achieved by modeling

- 37°C, 1 month
- 25°C, 3 month
- 15°C, 9-12 months
- 2-8°C, 12 months

- (1) high-throughput RT-qPCR assay to measure viral titers,
- (2) additional assay replicates and stability time-points, and
- (3) –80 °C control for each formulation to benchmark results at each stability time-point and temperature.

Current Status of Live, RV3-BB Vaccine Candidate and Formulations

Completed Ph 2 dose ranging clinical trials in Africa

Lancet Infect Dis. 22(5):668-678 (2022)



Neonatal rotavirus vaccine (RV3-BB) immunogenicity and safety in a neonatal and infant administration schedule in Malawi: a randomised, double-blind, four-arm parallel group dose-ranging study

Ongoing Phase 3 clinical trials in Indonesia

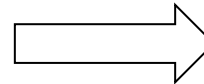
<https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT04185545>

This phase III trial aims to assess the efficacy, safety and immunogenicity of Rotavirus RV3 Vaccine (Bio Farma) in neonates, lot-to-lot consistency, and antigen interference with co-administered EPI vaccines

Current Formulation (in Ph 2 and 3 clinical trials)

Prior to oral administration:

- Frozen Liquid that must be thawed
- Preneutralization with Mylanta



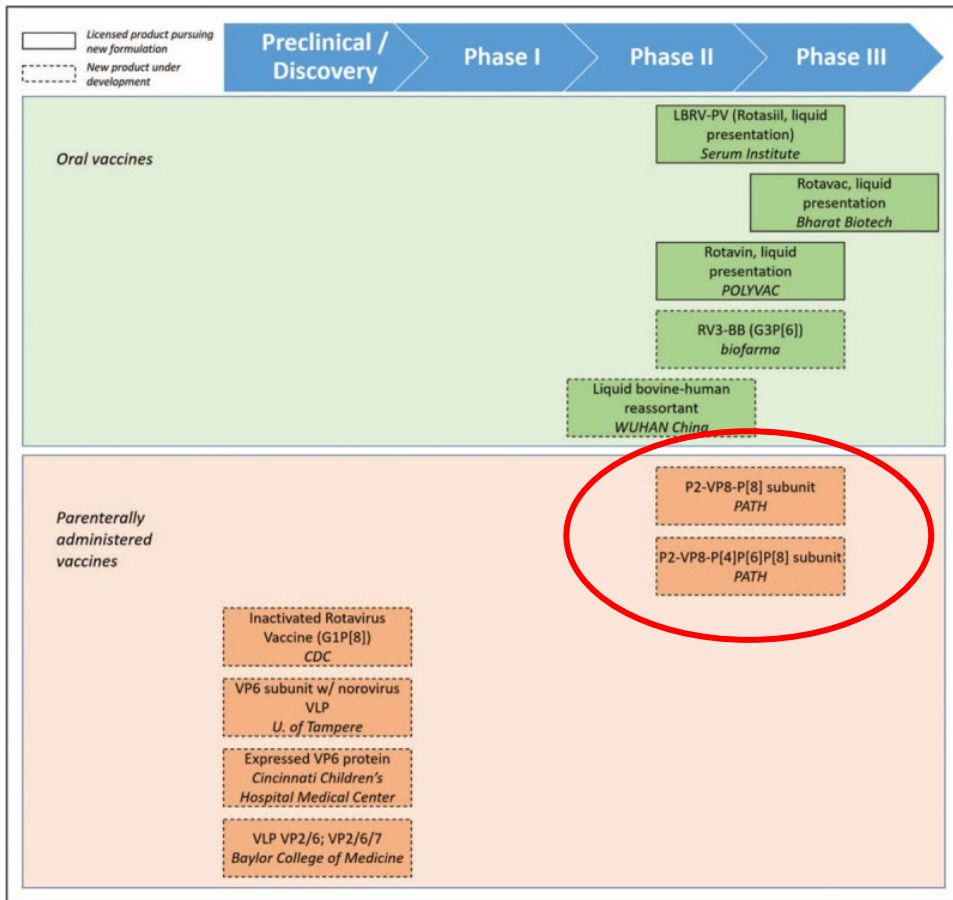
New Formulation (not implemented yet)

Ready to use:

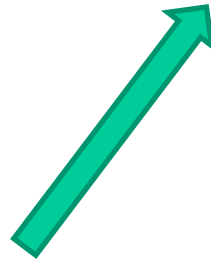
- Liquid, refrigerator stable
- No preneutralization needed

Vaccine Formulation Case Study #3:

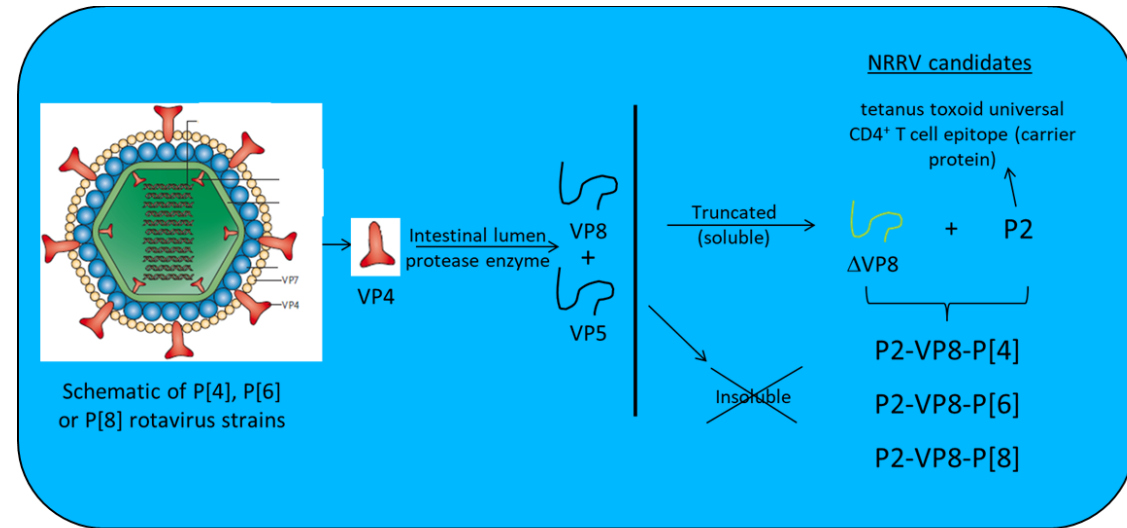
New Rotavirus Vaccine Candidates Targeted for Use in Low- and Middle- Income Countries (LMICs)



Case study #3



Trivalent Recombinant protein formulated with aluminum adjuvant for injection



Curr Opin Inf Dis 32, 435-44 (2019)

Funding from:

BILL & MELINDA GATES foundation

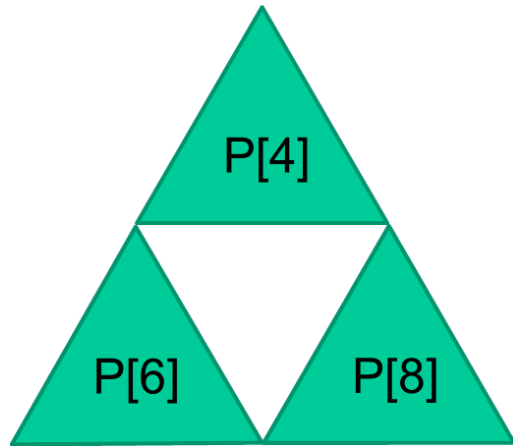



History of Development




- Discovered and designed by NIH
 - Vaccine 30 (2012) 6121
 - Vaccine 32 (2014) 4420
- Clinical and CMC development by PATH
 - Vaccine 33 (2015) 3766
 - Lancet 20 (2020) 851
 - Human Vaccines & Immuno 16 (2020) 1957
 - J Immunol Methods 494 (2021) 113056
- Analytical and formulation development performed at KU in collaboration with PATH
 - J Pharm Sci. 109 (2020) 380
 - J Pharm Sci. 109 (2020) 394
 - J Pharm Sci. 109 (2020) 476
 - J Pharm Sci. 110 (2021) 1042
 - J Pharm Sci. 110 (2021) 1054
 - J Pharm Sci. 111 (2022) 970

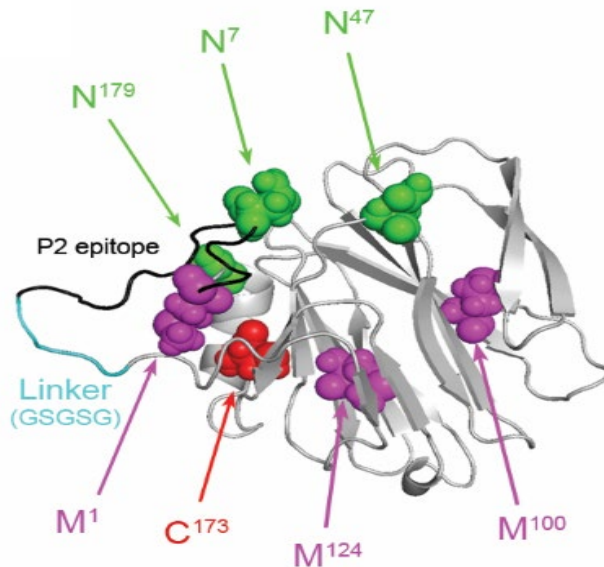
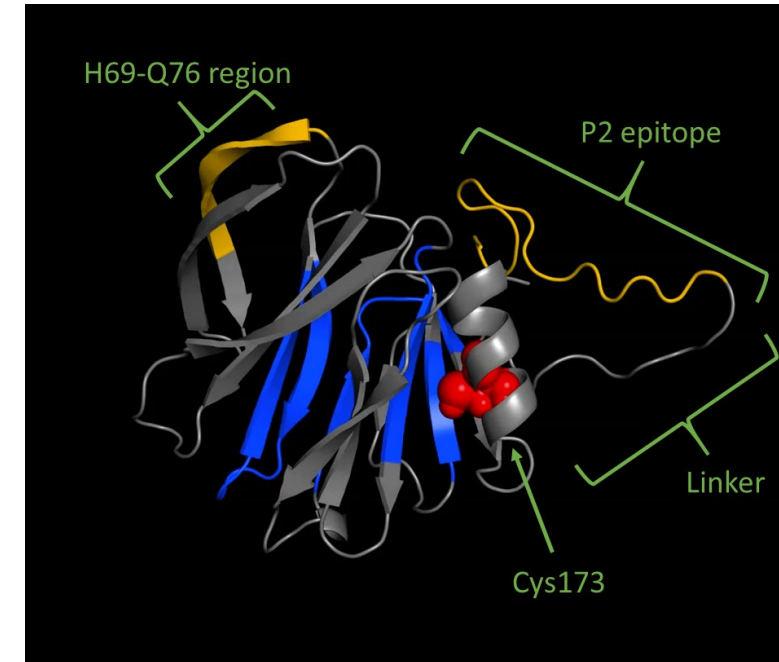
Structural Analysis and Preformulation Characterization of NRRV Antigens

Trivalent NRRV vaccine antigens



- 
1. X-ray structure of VP8-P4 available
 2. Performed I-Tasser Modeling of P2-VP8-P4
 3. Performed HDX-MS analysis of relative flexibility

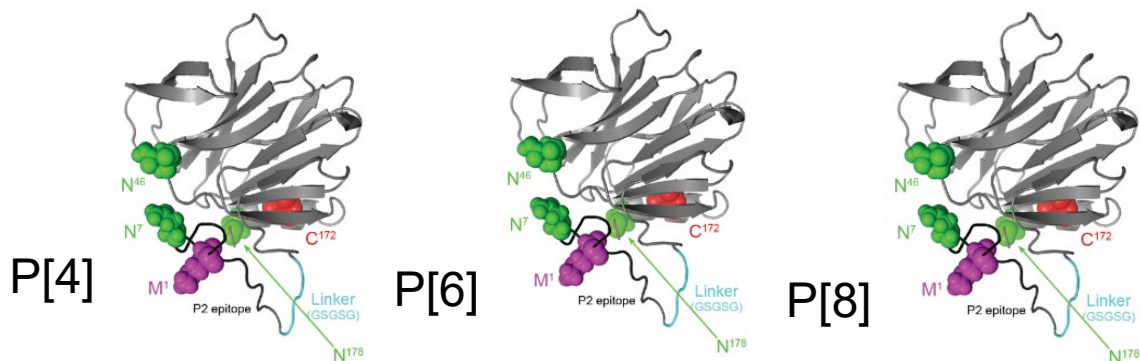
-  Fast exchange region (higher flexibility)
-  Moderate exchange region (intermediate flexibility)
-  Slow exchange region (lower flexibility)



Labile Amino Acid Residues

- Met¹ most susceptible to oxidation followed by Met¹⁰⁰ and Met¹²⁴
- Single Cys residue forms inter-molecular disulfide bonds
- Asn⁷ (and two Asn-Gly sites) deamidation

Formulation of t-NRRV with Aluminum Adjuvants and Preservatives



Vaccine Drug Product Goals:
 Liquid formulation, refrigerator stable,
 compatible with aluminum adjuvant and
vaccine preservatives

Alhydrogel®

- Aluminum hydroxide
- Long history of use in vaccines
- Readily available and low cost

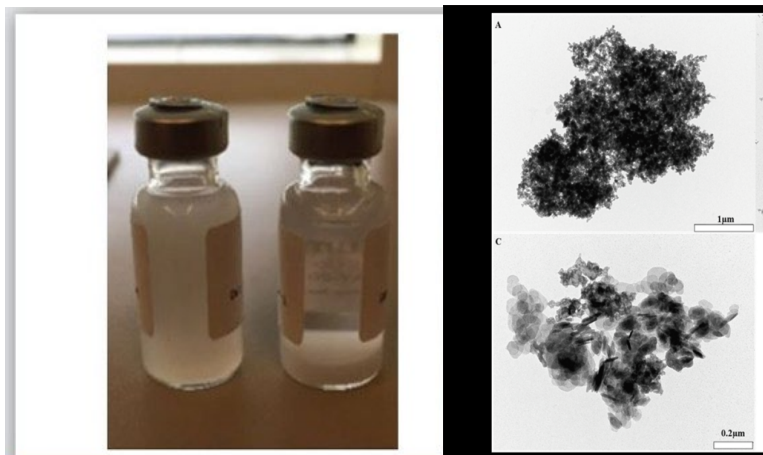
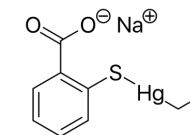
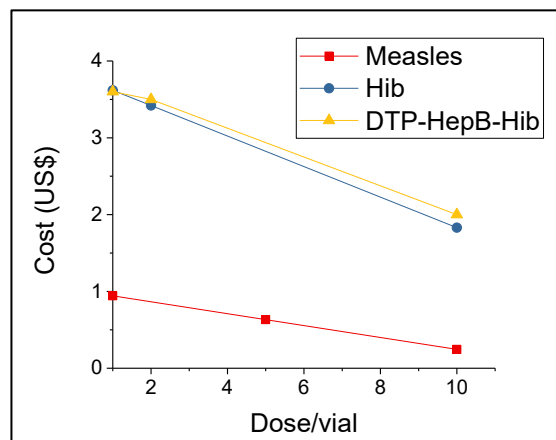


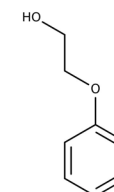
Figure 1. (left) Suspended and sedimented Alhydrogel®

Antimicrobial preservatives

- Multidose vaccines lower costs
- TH and 2-PE most commonly used in vaccines



Thimerosal
(TH)



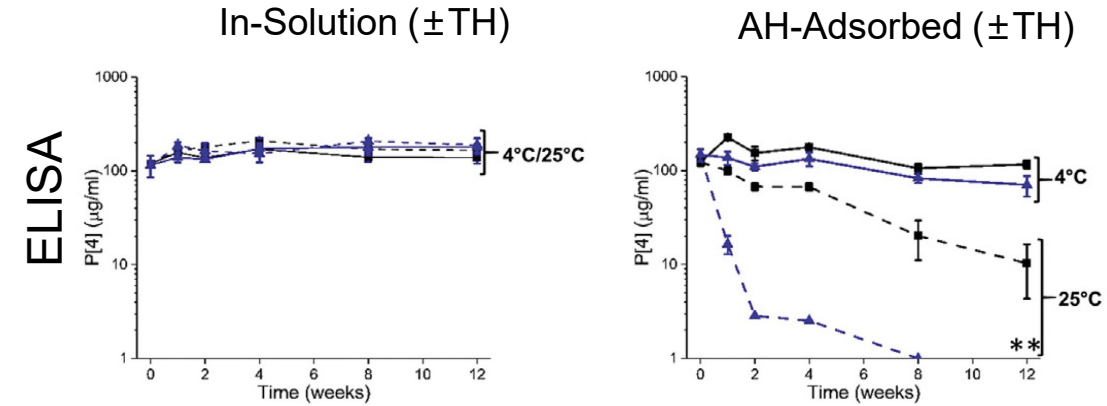
2-phenoxy-
ethanol
(2-PE)

t-NRRV Vaccine Formulation Challenges using Alhydrogel Adjuvant and Preservatives

Alhydrogel improves immunogenicity but decreases storage stability at elevated temps

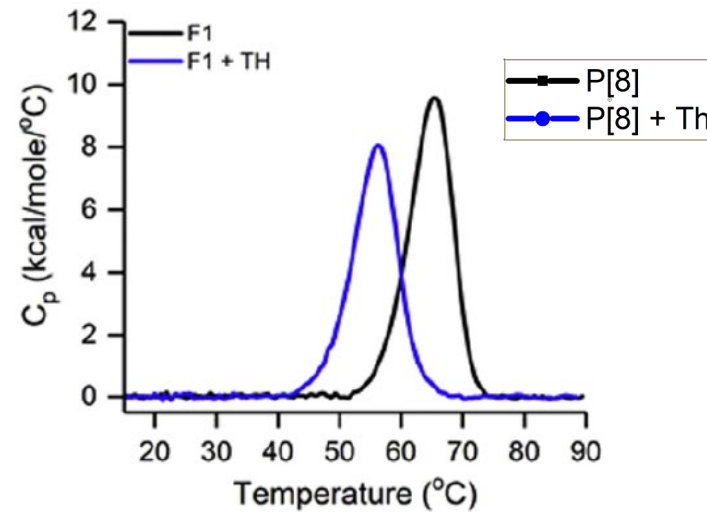
- Alhydrogel enhances immunogenicity of P2-VP8 compared to unadjuvanted in guinea pigs
- P2-VP8 adsorbs to Alhydrogel

Human Vaccines & Immuno 16 1957 (2020) (PATH)



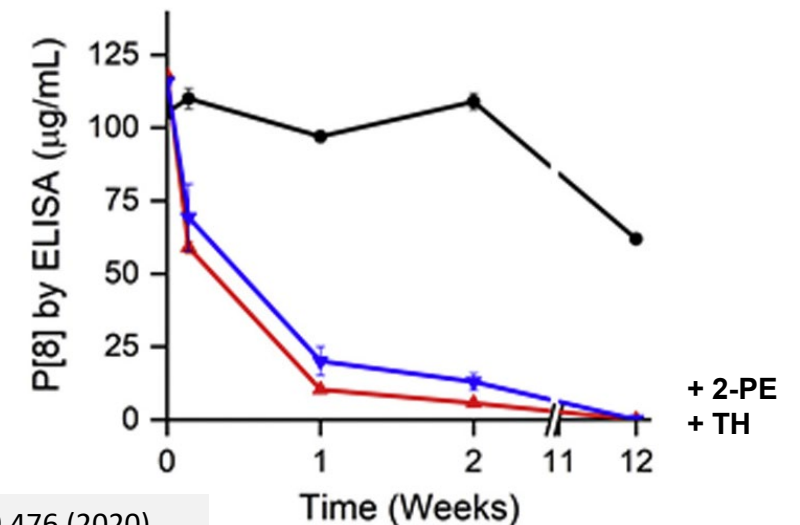
Sawant et al., J Pharm Sci 110 1867 (2021)

Common Vaccine Preservatives Destabilize AH-adsorbed NRRV Antigens



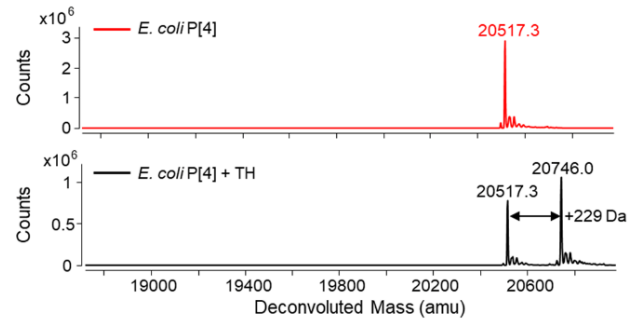
Agarwal et al., J Pharm Sci 109 476 (2020)

Accelerated Stability of AH-adsorbed P[8] (37°C)

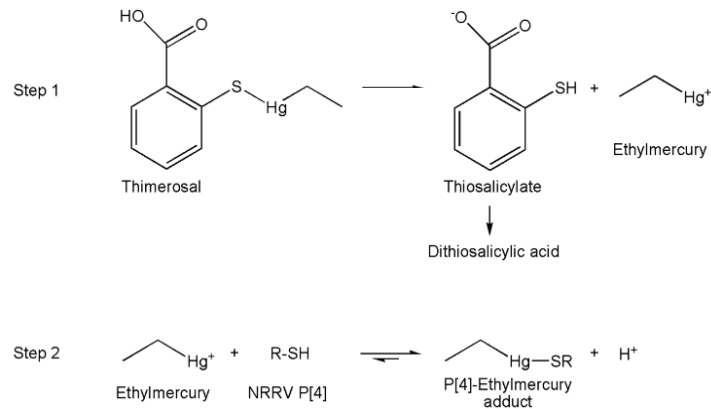


Mechanistic understanding of thimerosal interaction with NRRV antigens using HX-MS

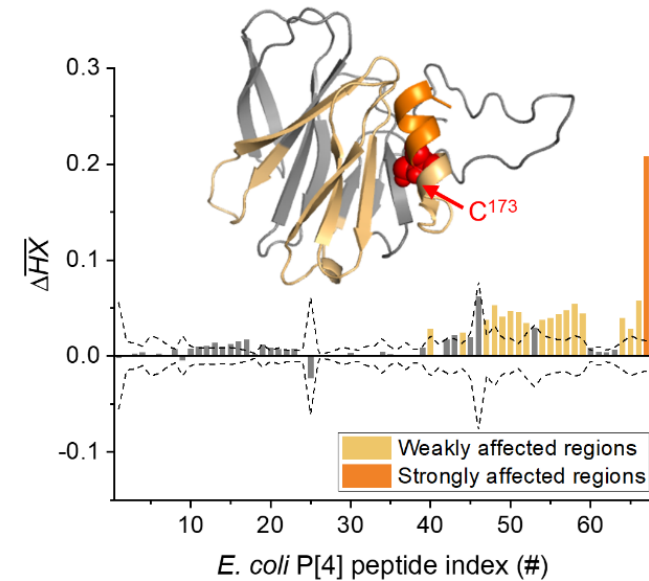
Intact MS



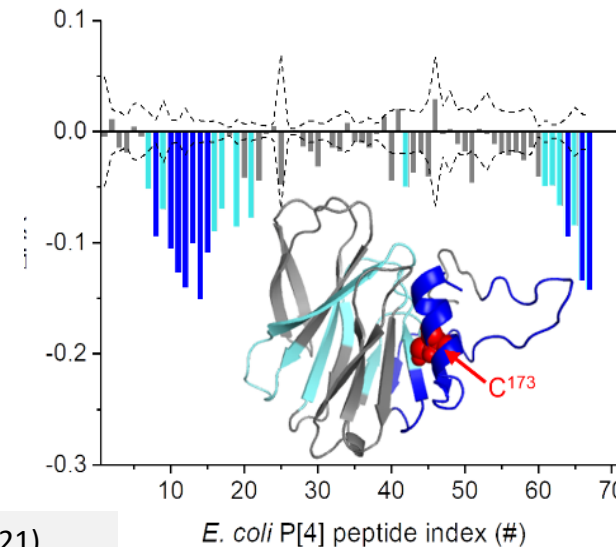
Proposed Mechanism



Thimerosal byproduct interacts with free SH group in P[4] antigen via partially reversible coordinate Hg-S bond

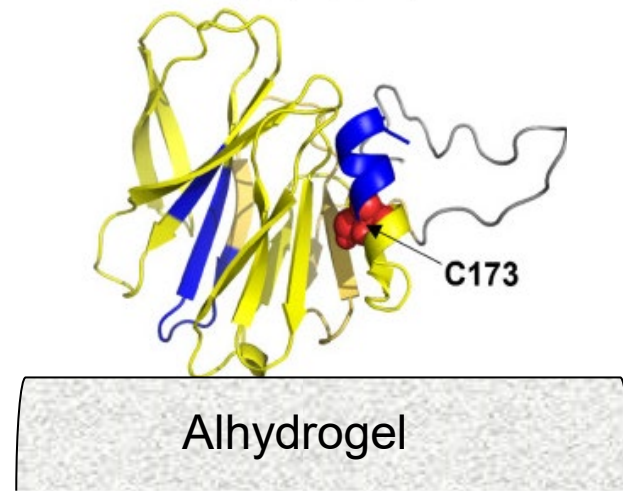
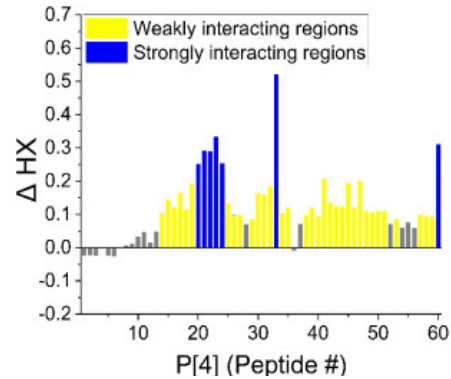


HX-MS analysis shows thimerosal interaction effects local flexibility of native P[4] antigen in region of free Cys residue



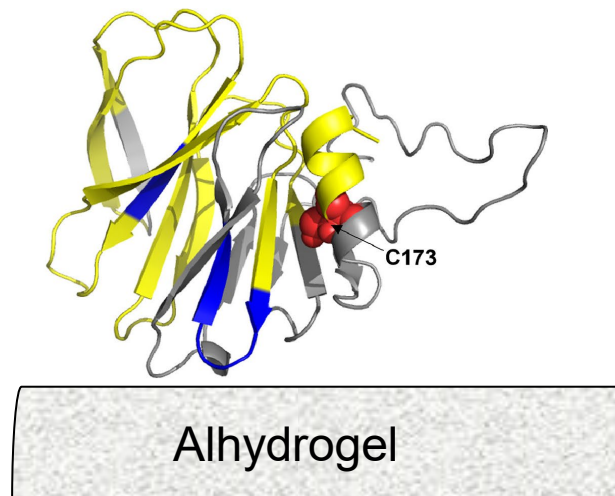
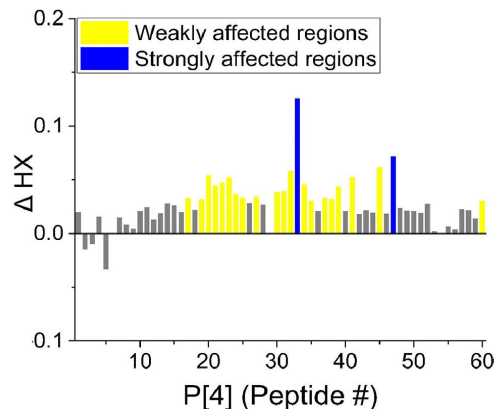
HX-MS epitope mapping shows conformational mAb binds to P[4] antigen in region of free Cys residue

HX-MS as New Analytical Tool to Probe Antigen Stability on Surface of Alhydrogel



AH-adsorbed P[4] with TH after 4 weeks at 4 °C (vs. time zero)

- Detect same TH induced destabilization sites on P[4]
- Additional sites of destabilized identified on P[4] upon AH-adsorption and storage



AH-adsorbed P[4] (no TH) after 4 weeks at 25 °C (vs. 4 °C)

- No effect at the TH induced destabilization sites on P[4]
- Additional sites of destabilized identified on P[4] upon AH-adsorption and 25°C storage

Current Status of t-NRRV Vaccine Candidate and Formulations

Completed Ph 2 clinical trials in South Africa

[Lancet 20\(5\):851-863 \(2020\)](#)

Safety and immunogenicity of a parenteral trivalent P2-VP8 subunit rotavirus vaccine: a multisite, randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial

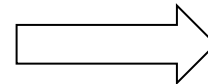
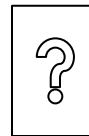
Ongoing Phase 3 clinical trials in Africa

<https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT04010448>

A Phase 3 Double-blind, Randomized, Active Comparator-controlled, Group-sequential, Multinational Trial to Assess the Safety, Immunogenicity and Efficacy of a Trivalent Rotavirus P2-VP8 Subunit Vaccine in Prevention of Severe Rotavirus Gastroenteritis in Healthy Infants

Current Formulation (in Ph 2 and 3 clinical trials)

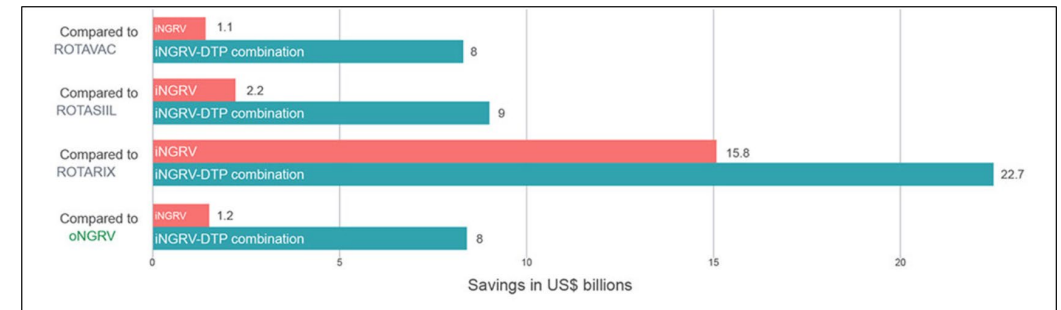
- Stand-alone t-NRRV formulated with Alhydrogel
- Single-dose formulation without preservatives (two-doses per container)



Ongoing formulation development work:

- Identify multidose formulations of NRRV
- Assess compatibility of NRRV with pediatric pentavalent combination vaccines

Significant cost savings of combination vaccine over stand alone t-NRRV



Acknowledgements



RV3-BB

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NRRV Vaccine Dev NRRV (Low Cost Mfg)

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- Dr. Kawaljit Kaur
- Dr. David Holland III
- Dr. Jian Xiong
- Dr. Neha Sahni
- Dr. John Hickey
- Dr. Sangeeta Joshi

Adjuvant formulations of RBD-J (Low-Cost Mfg.)

- Sakshi Bajoria
- Dr. Kawaljit Kaur
- Dr. Ozan Kumru
- Dr. Sangeeta Joshi

RV3-BB



- Dr. Julie Bines



- Dr. Erman Tritama,
- Dr. Novilia Sjafri Bachtiar
- Dr. Adriansjah Azhari



- Dr. Ahd Hamidi
- Dr Femke Hoeksema
- Dr. Alfred Luitjens
- Dr. Christopher Yallop

NRRV Vaccine Dev



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- Dr. Jessica White
- Dr Lakshmi Khandke
- Dr. George Robertson
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Low-Cost Vaccine Mfg. (Adjuvant formulations of RBD-J)



Massachusetts Institute of Technology

- Dr. Christopher Love
- Dr. Neil Dalvie
- Sergio Rodriguez-Apontec
- Danielle Camp



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Wadsworth Center

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- Hayle Novak
- Dr. Nick Mantis



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- Dr. Matthew Bottomley
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Low-Cost Vaccine Mfg. (NRRV)



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- Dr. Kerry R. Love
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- Dr. Laura Crowell
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