

Hilleman Laboratories hosts workshop on 'Innovation in Vaccine Manufacture and Delivery'

New Delhi, 4th February, 2015: Hilleman Laboratories, an equal joint-venture partnership between Merck & Co. and Wellcome Trust, organised a two-day workshop on 'Innovations in Vaccine Manufacture and Delivery' in the capital. The workshop adopted a multi-sectoral approach and witnessed participation from vaccine manufacturers, public health experts and representation from the communities and patient groups.

With the objective to create mutual awareness, sharing common learnings and cross-training in respective competencies; the workshop looked at three key tracks including vaccine thermostability, intellectual property and cost of manufacture of vaccines.

Sharing the rationale for this initiative, Dr. Davinder Gill, CEO, Hilleman Laboratories said, "Access to immunisation remains a key concern in developing countries today. This workshop successfully created a knowledge sharing platform where some of the key stakeholders got the opportunity to discuss relevant issues pertaining to the gaps that need immediate attention in vaccine manufacture and delivery models to help improve access."

The workshop focused on development of thermostable vaccines and regulatory landscape, outlining vaccine optimization parameters and their value proposition, challenges and complexity in deploying innovative vaccines, issues around clinical trials in developing countries and strengthening of the intellectual property regime for tech-transfer and licensing.

Thermostability and use of vaccines in the controlled temperature cold chain was identified as the key field adaptation need for vaccines by health workers. These needs were deemed highest for vaccines used in campaigns, such as oral cholera vaccine and measles, and vaccines used outside of the typical clinic, such as HPV, but also stated important for routine immunization vaccines.

A major concern emerged as the increasing price of vaccines in developing countries. A customized approach to fit specific the country settings was voiced by the patient groups.

One of the key constraints of enabling deeper vaccine penetration was attributed to limitations in distribution, public health delivery system and supply. Distribution is hampered by an inadequate cold chain and constraint to last-mile distribution, which has limited penetration of basic vaccines to 60-70 percent. The solution to amplify access to immunisation lies in distributing life-saving vaccines without the requirement for large bulk shipments, expensive warehousing and costly, difficult-to-maintain refrigerated shipping paths from the manufacturing plant to the end-user.

About Hilleman Laboratories

Hilleman Laboratories is a first-of-its-kind joint-venture partnership formed between Merck & Co., a global research-driven pharmaceutical organization and Wellcome Trust, a global charitable foundation dedicated to human and animal health by supporting the brightest minds.

Hilleman Laboratories has been named after renowned scientist and father of modern vaccines Dr. Maurice Hilleman. His dedication to making a difference through the practical application of vaccine research and delivering vaccines to people most in need forms the core mission of Hilleman Laboratories.

Operating on a not-for-profit principle, Hilleman Laboratories aims to bridge the gap between early vaccine research and clinical proof of concept and become a preferred partner for Low Cost Vaccine Manufacturers for vaccine development and usage for public health in the developing world.