

Indigenous vaccine for Hepatitis-B

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Hyderabad, Jun. 14: Revac-B, an indigenously made genetically-engineered vaccine for Hepatitis-B, was launched here yesterday by the city-based Bharat Biotech International Limited (BBIL).

Dr Krishna M. Ella, chief promoter of BBIL, said the vaccine that has undergone human clinical trials and successfully tested on 500 patients in India uses the recombinant DNA (DNA that has been recombined using constituents from different sources) technology and *Saccharomyces* (baker's yeast) for its composition.

Revac-B, to be marketed by Intas Pharmaceuticals, a company based in Ahmedabad, will go on sale in the next two months. The price, according to a Intas spokesperson, is competitive and roughly the same as the first indigenous vaccine Shanvac-B, although less than the one being marketed by SmithKline Beecham. The technology of the vaccine is from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA, and the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. BBIL will manufacture the vaccine at Turkapalli, near Hyderabad.

Speaking about Hepatitis-B, a virus that affects the liver and the causative factor for cancer, Dr. Ella said it is 100 times more infectious than HIV (while 100 particles of HIV spreads the disease, only one particle of Hepatitis virus is enough to do the same).

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