

First vaccinations against dengue commenced in the Philippines

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Sanofi Pasteur, the vaccines division of Sanofi, announced that vaccinations with Dengvaxia have commenced in the Philippines following official receipt of the first shipment of the vaccine earlier this month.

Dengvaxia, a tetravalent dengue vaccine, was approved in the Philippines on 22 December 2015 for the prevention of disease caused by all four Dengue types in individuals from 9-45 years of age living in endemic areas. The vaccine is administered in three doses given over a one-year period.

Asia bears 70 percent of dengue fever burden globally with an estimated 67 million people being sickened by the disease annually. In the Philippines alone, over 110,000 people on average get Dengue every year. Asian endemic countries spend an estimated 6.5 billion USD annually in both direct medical and indirect costs due to Dengue.³

"This is truly a great moment in the history of vaccinology," states Dr Guillaume Leroy, vice-president of Dengue Vaccine, Sanofi Pasteur. He added, "Dengvaxia's availability for administration by healthcare providers in the Philippines, to be followed closely by the initiation of a public sector immunization program in the country is a landmark event for global Dengue prevention and a great achievement for the people of the Philippines."

Medical Societies in the Philippines held a media event in Manila earlier this month to welcome receipt of the first shipment of Dengvaxia to the country. In attendance, Dr Rose Capeding, chief of the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine's department of microbiology, noted that the Philippines participated in all three phases of the clinical development of the vaccine and that healthcare providers there were delighted to be able to begin vaccinating against dengue, which continues to pose a major public health threat to the nation.

Dengue is a growing public health threat in tropical and subtropical countries in Asia and Latin America. Mainly an urban disease found in over 120 countries where half the world's population live, Dengue typically hits in the form of unpredictable outbreaks capable of paralyzing health care systems and disrupting social and economic activity in these city centers.

Sanofi Pasteur is introducing Dengvaxia first in endemic countries like the Philippines where the vaccine has the greatest potential to reduce dengue burden globally and help these countries to achieve the World Health Organization's goal to reduce dengue mortality by 50 percent and morbidity by 25 percent by 2020 in endemic countries.

Dengvaxia is also currently approved in Mexico, Brazil and El Salvador, which according to the Pan American Health Organization, collectively bear about 83 percent of the dengue burden in the Americas.