Top scientists unite to develop global scientific strategy Towards An HIV Cure

EurekAlert

[1]

28 February, 2011 (Boston, United States) More than 30 scientists gathered for a one-day meeting prior to the 18th Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI) to launch an international working group on HIV reservoirs and strategies to control them. Under the auspices of the International AIDS Society, the scientists will guide the development of a global scientific strategy Towards an HIV Cure. The strategy aims at building a global consensus on the state of the HIV reservoirs field and defining scientific priorities that must be addressed by future research to tackle HIV persistency in patients undergoing antiretroviral therapy, the key hurdle impeding any alternative to long-term therapy. This global scientific strategy will help mobilize and focus resources to fund the most promising strategies towards a sterilizing or a functional cure*, and stimulate international research collaborations.

The international scientific working group will be co-chaired by Professor FranÃ§oise Barré-Sinoussi, International AIDS Society (IAS) President-elect and 2008 Nobel Laureate for Medicine, and Professor Steve Deeks, University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) and Positive Health Program (AIDS Program) at San Francisco General Hospital. The working group will work closely with an advisory board composed of leading advocates and major research stakeholders in HIV cure, including representatives of people living with HIV, funders and clinicians from high prevalence settings. The advisory group will be co-chaired by Pr. FranÃ§oise Barré-Sinoussi and Dr. Jack Whitescarver, Director of the Office of AIDS Research at the National Institutes of Health.

"Antiretroviral therapy has greatly improved the quality of life and reduced mortality rates of people living with HIV. However, even in successfully treated individuals, HIV remains dormant in certain cells, obliging patients to undertake life-long treatment to keep these viral reservoirs under control. If we are to envisage a successful discontinuation of treatment, we need to better understand why and how HIV infection persists despite treatment and to develop new therapeutic strategies," said Pr. FranÃ§oise Barré-Sinoussi.

This initiative comes on the back of the successful workshop Towards a cure: HIV Reservoirs and strategies to Control Them, held in conjunction with the XVIII International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2010) in Vienna in July 2010. The International AIDS Society (IAS) decided to continue to mobilize the scientific community and guide the development of the global scientific strategy Towards an HIV Cure, which will be presented at the XIX International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2012), to be held in Washington DC in July 2012.

In line with the International AIDS Society's strategic plan for 2010-2014, the IAS Governing Council has prioritized an HIV cure as one of its four key policy areas. "It is our mission to mobilize the scientific community and advocate for increased investments in HIV cure research, in order to develop short-term and cost-effective treatment strategies," said Bertrand Audoin, IAS Executive Director.

"As a physician, I am fully aware that HIV persistence remains a daunting and complex challenge," said Elly Katabira, IAS President. "But we need to offer people living with HIV an alternative to the burden of a difficult life-long ARV regimen."

Given the current economic situation and the pace of new infections that, in resource-limited countries, are still outstripping numbers on treatment by five to two, long-term remission of infected individuals, or even eradication of viral reservoirs is a time sensitive priority.

SOURCE [2]

Source URL (retrieved on *04/02/2015 - 3:35am*):
http://www.mdtmag.com/news/2011/02/top-scientists-unite-develop-global-scientific-strategy-towards-hiv-cure

Links:
[1] http://www.eurekalert.org/multimedia/pub/30062.php?from=179808
[2] http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2011-02/ias-tsu022811.php