



OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF PARLIAMENT
PARLIAMENT BUILDING
OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL
FREETOWN
Tel: 232-076-615187
E-mail: admin@parliament.gov.sl



PRESS RELEASE
23rd July, 2015

EBOVAC-SALONE LECTURES MPs ON TRIAL VACCINE

The Principal Investigator of EBOVAC-Salone, Dr. Bailah Leigh on the 23rd July, 2015, in the Conference Room of the New Administrative Building in Parliament, presented to MPs on the Committee of Health and Sanitation the objective of the pilot dual vaccine test that is about to be carried out in the Kambia District. According to the presentation, the trial of the vaccines in Kambia is yet to start, because it is awaiting approvals from the Ethics Commission and the Pharmacy Board, the finalization of the infrastructure, community sensitization, and the completion of staff training.

Dr. Leigh said that the study was going to be run by COMAHS, in partnership with MoHS, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine amongst others, with the view of determining the “immunogenicity of a new prime-boost ebola vaccine regimen in subjects over the age of one year in an ebola affected community”. He said that the reasons for the use of the “prime-boost-regimen” were to increase the level of protection that would be induced by the vaccine, and the duration of the protection that would be followed by the vaccination. He furthered that the reasons for the development of the vaccine which had been tested successfully without adverse effects on primates, and human beings in non-ebola affected countries like UK and USA were to cut down on huge cost of surveillance to control EVD; vaccination could be used to contain future outbreak; and that mass vaccination at the national level may prevent future outbreaks in the country. He also said that it was voluntary to take the trial vaccine in Kambia District that would be initially tested on 40 adults. He said that the ongoing CDC vaccine only targets health workers, but the EBOVAC, a dual vaccine trial aims at the entire population in the country. He also said that the legacy of the study would benefit Kambia with “an emergency room, a research laboratory, cold store depot, and PHU fridges, not leaving out capacity building for the local staff.

The Deputy Chairman of the Committee on Health and Sanitation, Hon. Alhassan Kamara, before yielding the floor to MPs, said that the ebola outbreak had provoked a lot of discussions, and had caused irreparable damage to the nation, whilst citing the loss of health workers and loved ones to EVD. He called for the assurance of safety during the trial of the vaccine, and expressed fear that it might add to the current misery of the people.

Members of Parliament raised a lot of concerns hinging on the difference between the two trial vaccines, remedial measures in case of failure, motivation to get volunteers, stakeholders to volunteer for the trial vaccines, Kambia MPs to sensitize constituents on the need for the trial and volunteerism, deniability of EVD in Kambia in certain areas, guarantee of the trial vaccine, timeline for sexual behavior, if Dr. Bailah Leigh is willing to take the trial vaccines, timeline for both trial vaccines, evidence-based result of where the trials had been done on human beings.

In answering the questions posed by MPs, Dr. Leigh said among other things that the trial vaccines would be given to adults and one year old children and above on a voluntary basis, anyone who suffered side effects as a result of the trial would be cared for, unhealthy people and pregnant women are not allowed to take the trial vaccines, two weeks before taking the vaccine, you could be put on contraception, the vaccine trial is exclusively for Kambia, therefore Dr. Leigh is not eligible, and to heighten sensitization on the need for the trial vaccines. He also said that “once the trial vaccines succeed in Kambia, it will be replicated in the whole country”, and by “taking the vaccines, it is possible that you cannot get ebola”. He also furthered that the “first

trial of the vaccine can be monitored after weeks, before the next trial can be administered after several weeks again”.

The substantive Chairman, for the Committee on Health and Sanitation in Parliament, Hon. Dr. Abdulai Sesay thanked the team for the presentation, and encouraged them to get approval from the Pharmacy Board, whilst noting that the research laboratory that would be built in Kambia would benefit the people immensely.

Department of Public Relations

Parliament of Sierra Leone

OAU Drive, Tower Hill

Freetown

Tel: 076840285/077669726/078495023/078426851