

# Waisman Center set to develop Ebola vaccine

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The UW-Madison Waisman Center is set to begin development on a “full-virus” vaccine for Ebola, an often fatal virus affecting thousands in Africa.

Starting in March, this \$3 million project will produce up to 1,000 doses of an experimental vaccine for a Japanese clinical trial due to begin December 2018.

Yoshihiro Kawaoka, a veterinary medicine professor, will work with Waisman Biomanufacturing at the company’s specialized facility in the UW-Madison lab as the vaccine is created.

“The goal is to produce a safe and effective vaccine against Ebola virus for people,” says Kawaoka, an expert on Ebola and influenza. According to a release from the Waisman Center, this is the only Ebola vaccine candidate of its kind in development.

Vaccines train the body’s immune system to recognize and attack certain diseases by exposing it to viruses or parts of viruses.

This particular vaccine — Delta VP30 — can safely expose the immune system to more of the virus, granting better protection. It’s safe, because the virus is missing a gene it needs to reproduce in host cells.

“Here, we have a whole-virus vaccine that presents all the viral proteins to the immune system, which may result in increased and broadened immune responses compared to vaccines that present only a single viral antigen to the immune system,” Kawaoka said.

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