

## **Nobel medicine laureate sees progress on AIDS vaccine**

December 07, 2008

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**Montagnier insists the creation of a 'therapeutic vaccine' within four to five years is realistic.**

Stockholm -- Luc Montagnier, co-winner of the 2008 Nobel Prize for Medicine, Saturday stood by his view that a "therapeutic vaccine" for the AIDS pandemic could be created within four to five years.

"It is difficult to say, but it is perhaps a case of four to five years," he told AFP, following a press conference in Stockholm ahead of receiving the prestigious prize next week.

In October Montagnier, 76, said an AIDS treatment could be possible in the future with a "therapeutic" rather than preventive vaccine for which results might be published in three or four years if financial backing is forthcoming.

Montagnier and fellow French researcher Francoise Barre-Sinoussi, who shared the Nobel Prize, discovered the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) that causes AIDS by destroying immune cells, one of the scourges of modern times.

On Saturday Montagnier insisted the creation of a "therapeutic vaccine" within four to five years was realistic and that there are various ways to reduce the HIV virus until a cure is found.

He noted that work on a vaccine has been going on for 10 years and that it was easier to research a therapeutic rather than a preventative vaccine.

"Before we get a vaccine there are many ways to reduce the contaminations by improving ways of life standards in developing and poor countries, in giving them more advice," he said.

While also addressing journalists in Stockholm, Barre-Sinoussi said it is impossible to say when a preventative AIDS vaccine would be made available and that researchers must keep working on it.

Montagnier and Barre-Sinoussi shared one half of the 2008 award, while the other half went to Harald zur Hausen of Germany, who discovered the virus that causes cervical cancer.

Zur Hausen also attended Saturday's press conference in which he echoed Barre-Sinoussi's response that winning the Nobel prize had completely changed his life.

All three researchers will give their acceptance speech on Sunday and receive their award, with a check for 10 million Swedish kronor (930,000 euros), on Wednesday.

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AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) has claimed more than 25 million lives since it first came to prominence in 1981. Today, around 33 million people are living with AIDS or harboring HIV, 67 percent of them south of the Sahara.

{AFP/Expatica}