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Cuban Lung Cancer Vaccine Raises Interest Abroad

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Cuba has already developed three vaccines that could have a leading role in biotechnology research with an end to the U.S. blockade. A Cuban-produced vaccine has cured about 100 Peruvian lung cancer patients, the medical director of the Institute of Innovation and Biotechnology of Cuba Diego Venegas said Thursday.

The findings demonstrated that the medicine Cimavax-EGF increased the survival of the patients and improved their life quality, Venegas added during the 5th International Workshop Cimavax-EGF in the Cuban capital of Havana. The vaccine would increase life expectancy for an average of four to six months longer.

RELATED: Chilean Patients Will Benefit from Cuban Health Expertise “We have used Cimavax-EGF on patients with an advanced-stage of cancer, on which chemotherapy failed – a work we have presented in an event in the United States,” he added.

The vaccine Cimavax-EGF was registered in Peru in 2008 and has been made available for free to Cubans since 2011.

It represents the first effective therapeutic medicine that can alleviate the symptoms of lung cancer – with low levels of toxicity, as well as low production costs. Although it does not cure cancer, the tumors have consistently reduced in size, improving the quality and life expectancy of the patients.

The renewal of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Cuba has opened exciting opportunities for U.S. medical institutes, while Japan and Europe already have started their own clinic trials of Cimavax.

Cuba hosts some of the best and most innovative biotechnology and medical research in the world. In April, during New York Governor Andrew Cuomo's visit to Havana, Roswell Park Cancer Institute finalized an agreement with Cuba's Center for Molecular Immunology to develop a lung cancer vaccine and begin clinical trials in the U.S., in order to apply for the Food and Drug Administration's green light, reported The Wire.

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The Molecular Immunology Center located in Havana also created the Meningitis-B vaccine in 1985, and later for Hepatitis-B and Dengue as well. According to a 2010 Science Magazine article, written by Stanford University scientists Paul K. Drain and Michele Barry, Cuba had better health indicators than the United States, with 20 times less resources per capita, thanks to effective preventive approaches and a pharmaceutical model that is not based on profit, as it is in developed countries like the United States.

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