

A single 'live' vaccine could fortify immune systems against measles and other diseases

Maria was eligible to participate in a clinical trial to test whether an extra dose of measles vaccine prevented not just the measles but many childhood infections that cause serious illness and death.

In the U.S., where life-threatening infections are rare, such a trial might not garner many volunteers. But in Guinea-Bissau, where lives have been scarred by decades of scant resources and poor medical care, families lined up in droves.

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The researchers leading the trial—anthropologist Peter Aaby and physician Christine Benn, whom I had traveled to Guinea-Bissau to meet—have amassed evidence that a few specific vaccines can thwart a multitude of threatening plagues. Over decades they have published hundreds of studies suggesting that live, attenuated vaccines, which are made from weakened but living viruses or bacteria, can stave off not just their target infections but other diseases, such as respiratory infections (including pneumonia), blood infections (including sepsis) and diarrheal infections.

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New research in immunology suggests that live vaccines can have such wide-ranging effects because they stimulate a part of the immune system that fights a broad-based war against all outside invaders, giving the system a head start on defense.

Read full, original post: [Could a Single Live Vaccine Protect against a Multitude of Diseases?](#)