



Tuberculosis Vaccine Development: Progress in Clinical Evaluation

 Suraj B. Sable,^a James E. Posey,^a Thomas J. Scriba^{b,c,d}

^aDivision of Tuberculosis Elimination, National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, Georgia, USA

^bSouth African Tuberculosis Vaccine Initiative, Cape Town, South Africa

^cInstitute of Infectious Disease and Molecular Medicine, Cape Town, South Africa

^dDivision of Immunology, Department of Pathology, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa

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SUMMARY Tuberculosis (TB) is the leading killer among all infectious diseases worldwide despite extensive use of the *Mycobacterium bovis* bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine. A safer and more effective vaccine than BCG is urgently required. More than a dozen TB vaccine candidates are under active evaluation in clinical trials aimed to prevent infection, disease, and recurrence. After decades of extensive research, renewed promise of an effective vaccine against this ancient airborne disease has recently emerged. In two innovative phase 2b vaccine clinical trials, one for the prevention of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* infection in healthy adolescents and another for the prevention of TB disease in *M. tuberculosis*-infected adults, efficacy signals were observed. These breakthroughs, based on the greatly expanded knowledge of the *M. tuberculosis* infection spectrum, immunology of TB, and vaccine platforms, have reinvigorated the TB vaccine field. Here, we review our current understanding of natural immunity to TB, limitations in BCG immunity that are guiding vaccinologists to design novel TB vaccine candidates and concepts, and the desired attributes

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of a modern TB vaccine. We provide an overview of the progress of TB vaccine candidates in clinical evaluation, perspectives on the challenges faced by current vaccine concepts, and potential avenues to build on recent successes and accelerate the TB vaccine research-and-development trajectory.

KEYWORDS clinical trials, desired attributes, developmental trajectory, natural immunity, new TB vaccines, tuberculosis

INTRODUCTION

Vaccines are the victories of immunology. Yet the development of effective vaccines that can provide lifelong protection against three of the most deadly infectious diseases, tuberculosis (TB), human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/AIDS, and malaria, has so far eluded vaccinologists. Pathogen evasion of the host immune response is the shared trait of these diseases. With ~1.6 million deaths annually, TB, an ancient airborne disease caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, is the top killer among all infectious diseases worldwide (1). Unfortunately, the current strategies are not enough to achieve TB elimination in this century. Increases in the number of drug-resistant TB cases and converging syndemics of TB, HIV, and type 2 diabetes warrant novel prevention and control measures (2). Without effective TB vaccines, shorter treatment regimens, and improved point-of-care diagnostics, we will not be able to end the global TB epidemic.

Historical efforts to develop an effective TB vaccine are long-standing, going back to the 1800s, yet *Mycobacterium bovis* bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG), a partially effective vaccine developed in 1921, remains the only licensed vaccine against TB (Fig. 1). BCG is a part of the World Health Organization's Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) and is listed on the WHO's list of essential medicines (233). Even though time-tested and most widely used, BCG has major limitations. Its efficacy against severe and extrapulmonary forms of pediatric TB is well recognized, but highly variable and poor protection at all ages against pulmonary TB remains a major concern (3). Despite the widespread use of BCG, it is estimated that around one-quarter of the world's population currently harbors a latent TB infection (LTBI) (4), and around 3 in every 1,000 people globally carry latent multidrug-resistant *M. tuberculosis* infection (5). Although LTBI is by definition clinically asymptomatic and approximately 90% of individuals with LTBI will not progress to disease, this state in the spectrum of infection is a potential source of disease reactivation and remains a major impediment to TB elimination. A new TB vaccine that has greater protective efficacy than BCG and that can prevent disease in adolescents and adults, thereby interrupting *M. tuberculosis* transmission, is essential for global TB elimination and for achieving the WHO's "End TB" goals of 90 to 95% reductions in TB cases and associated deaths by 2035 (<http://www.who.int/tb/strategy/end-tb/en/>). The development of a safer and highly efficacious TB vaccine therefore should hold a top-priority position on the global research agenda.

In the last 2 decades, over 20 vaccine candidates have progressed through clinical studies, and 14 are under active evaluation in clinical trials (Fig. 2). Unfortunately, several candidates will not advance through clinical development, as vaccine development has historically been an empirical process. Disappointing results, as exemplified by setbacks in the MVA85A and AERAS-422 trials (6–8), highlight our incomplete understanding of the complexity of the host immune responses to *M. tuberculosis* and challenges associated with developing a vaccine that can elicit lifelong protective immunity. These trials highlight the gap in our knowledge of the correlates of protection or biomarkers that can predict who will control infection and who will develop the disease. However, results from recent path-breaking vaccine trials (9, 10), together with recent advances in the identification of host biomarkers that have improved our understanding of the spectrum of *M. tuberculosis* infection, disease pathogenesis, and disease progression (11–17), promise that effective TB vaccines remain an attainable goal. In this review article, we discuss some of the challenges faced by current TB vaccine concepts, the progress of current vaccine candidates in clinical trials, and

1834	Johann Lukas Schönlein proposes the name “tuberculosis” for the devastating disease.
1865	Jean-Antoine Villemin demonstrates the transmissibility of tuberculosis (TB).
1882	Robert Koch discovers the causative agent of TB and names it <i>Mycobacterium tuberculosis</i> in 1883.
1884	Robert Koch expounds his famous “Koch’s postulates.”
1890	Koch’s “therapeutic vaccine,” tuberculin derived from killed TB bacilli, is found to be ineffective with extensive immunopathology (“Koch’s phenomenon”).
1900	Albert Calmette and Camille Guérin begin TB vaccine research at the Pasteur Institute, Lille, France.
1902	Edmond Nocard isolates a virulent <i>M. bovis</i> strain from the milk of a cow with a tuberculous udder.
1905	Robert Koch wins the Nobel Prize in medicine for his discoveries related to TB and its etiological agent.
1908	Calmette and Guérin begin subculturing Nocard’s <i>M. bovis</i> strain on potato-bile-glycerin medium at roughly 3-week intervals.
1912-1920	Calmette and Guérin conduct several animal experiments. After 230 passages, they designate the attenuated bacillus “BCG” in 1920.
1921	The first infant is vaccinated with BCG by an oral route at the Charité hospital Paris by Dr. Weill-Hallé.
1924-1928	More than 114,000 infants are vaccinated with BCG in Europe and North America without serious complications.
1929-1933	Lübeck disaster: 251 neonates are accidentally vaccinated with a BCG lot contaminated with <i>M. tuberculosis</i> ; 173 develop clinical TB and 72 die.
1933-1935	The first organized BCG vaccine trials in Saskatchewan infants and Native American Indians, which later demonstrate long-term BCG efficacy.
1935-1940	Distribution of BCG to several countries for worldwide application. Change of route of administration to mainly via skin.
1950	Major BCG vaccine trials are started by the BMRC and USPHS. BCG shows 80% protective efficacy in the BMRC trial, and a <i>M. microti</i> vaccine shows a comparable protective efficacy.
1956	Seed lots of BCG are established under the direction of the WHO following identification of several BCG daughter strains.
1968	The Chingleput trial in South India is started; it later reveals no efficacy of BCG against adult pulmonary TB.
1974	BCG is incorporated into the WHO’s Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI).
1993	The WHO declares TB a global public health emergency, which reinvigorates TB vaccine research.
1995	Increased recognition that the efficacy of BCG against adult pulmonary TB is highly variable.
1996	The first molecular analysis of genetic differences between virulent <i>M. bovis</i> and BCG.
2000	Four strains (Glaxo, Danish, Pasteur, and Tokyo) account for 90% of the BCG vaccine administered worldwide.
2004	The WHO BCG guidelines: A single dose of BCG should be given to all healthy infants in high-TB-burden countries as soon as possible after birth.
2007	The revised WHO BCG guidelines: Infants at risk for HIV infection should no longer be vaccinated with BCG*.
2011	The BCG World Atlas reveals universal BCG vaccination in 157 countries with a coverage rate exceeding 80% of all infants on the planet.
2013	A new BCG-booster vaccine MVA85A shows no efficacy in a clinical trial in South African infants.
2015	A worldwide shortage of BCG vaccine with a deficit of more than 17 million doses.
2018	Efficacy signals are observed in phase 2b trials of M72:AS01 _E and BCG revaccination in Africa.

FIG 1 Timeline of key milestones in the history of tuberculosis vaccine development and human use. BCG, bacille Calmette-Guérin; BMRC, British Medical Research Council; USPHS, U.S. Public Health Service; WHO, World Health Organization; MVA85A, modified vaccinia virus Ankara vector expressing antigen 85A of *M. tuberculosis*; M72:AS01_E, a recombinant fusion protein of *M. tuberculosis* 39a (Rv1196) and *M. tuberculosis* 32a (Rv0125) in the AS01_E adjuvant. *The WHO further updated guidelines on BCG vaccination of infants born to HIV-infected mothers in 2018. According to these guidelines, HIV-infected neonates should delay BCG vaccination until antiretroviral therapy (ART) has been started and they are immunologically stable. If HIV-infected individuals, including children, who are receiving antiretroviral therapy (ART) are clinically well and immunologically stable, they should be vaccinated with BCG. Furthermore, neonates with an unknown HIV status born to HIV-infected women should be vaccinated if they have no clinical evidence suggestive of HIV infection, regardless of whether the mother is receiving ART.

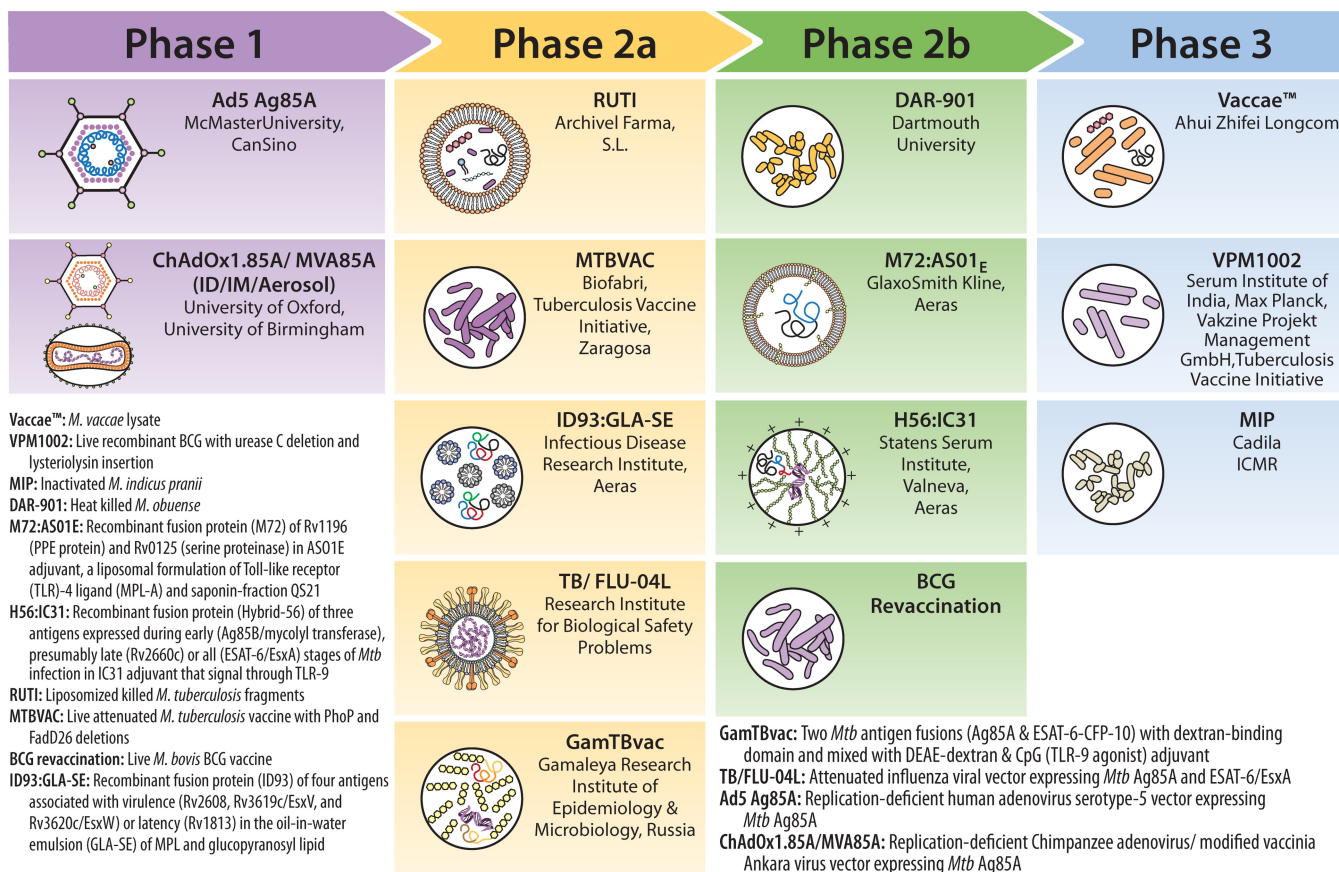


FIG 2 Current global clinical pipeline of TB vaccine candidates. The 2019 global clinical portfolio of TB vaccine candidates includes mycobacterial killed, whole-cell, or extract vaccine candidates (Vaccacae, MIP, DAR-901, and RUTI); live-attenuated mycobacterial vaccine candidates (VPM1002, BCG revaccination, and MTBVAC); recombinant live-attenuated or replication-deficient virus-vectored candidates expressing an *M. tuberculosis* protein(s) (TB/FLU-04L, Ad5Ag85A, and ChAdOx1.85A/MVA85A); and a mycobacterial fusion protein(s) in an adjuvant formulation (M72:AS01_E, H56:IC31, ID93:GLA-SE, and GamTBvac). See the text for additional information on vaccine candidates. ID, intradermal; IM, intramuscular; *Mtb*, *M. tuberculosis*.

potential avenues to build on recent successes and accelerate the TB vaccine research-and-development (R&D) trajectory.

NATURAL IMMUNITY AND TB VACCINE DEVELOPMENT

The human immune system can contain *M. tuberculosis* infection in most cases, and only 5 to 15% of people with LTBI progress to TB disease during their lifetime (1). These figures, along with the evidence that some people remain negative by *M. tuberculosis* infection tests despite repeated *M. tuberculosis* exposures and that some individuals revert to being test negative after initially testing positive (18–21), suggest that humans can clear *M. tuberculosis* to avoid or abort infection. Furthermore, established LTBI seems to confer protection against subsequent TB disease upon reinfection in a proportion of individuals (22–24), strongly suggesting that infected humans mount protective immunity against *M. tuberculosis*, which can drive “natural-immunity-guided” vaccine development. Likewise, prior infection appears to be protective against reinfection in some animal models (25, 26). This natural immunity to reinfection, termed concomitant immunity, likely requires distinct immune responses other than the long-lived memory immune responses usually targeted by conventional vaccination strategies (27). It may also require innate myeloid cell activation elicited by prior infection or established LTBI (28). Furthermore, in the preantibiotic era, self-healing was reported for some pulmonary TB patients, suggesting that the natural immune response can successfully heal or provide long-term control of clinical disease without antibiotics in some individuals (29). Long-term immunity against *M. tuberculosis* is clearly cell medi-

ated, based on substantial experimental evidence (30). However, there is mounting evidence for a possible role of antibodies in protection (31, 32). Antibodies that may contribute to protection have recently been identified in some individuals who remain healthy despite long-term, heavy *M. tuberculosis* exposures, with or without exhibiting signs of LTBI (33, 34). These findings collectively offer potential evidence for the existence of natural immunity in those immunologically sensitized by *M. tuberculosis* infection and those not sensitized by *M. tuberculosis* infection. Although natural immunity might not be widely generalizable, it clearly can occur in some people (termed “resisters”) (35) and may inform rational TB vaccine design. These resisters, who persistently test negative by *M. tuberculosis* infection tests such as the tuberculin skin test (TST) and interferon gamma (IFN- γ) release assays (IGRAs) despite heavy *M. tuberculosis* exposure, harbor antibody responses and non-IFN- γ T-cell responses to *M. tuberculosis*-specific proteins, suggesting that they may have in fact once been infected (or may still be infected) with *M. tuberculosis* (21). Therefore, understanding the immunological footprint and specificity of antigen recognition in these populations, including various high-exposure cohorts of resisters, and improved insights into *M. tuberculosis*-host biology are vital for developing an effective vaccine.

Natural Immunity against TB

M. tuberculosis is a well-adapted intracellular pathogen of human phagocytes, with lung-resident macrophages being the primary conduit of infection and immunity. Macrophages serve as the major niche for infection and as front-line enforcers of protective immunity, both innate and acquired, to control or eliminate *M. tuberculosis*. The recognition of *M. tuberculosis* by various receptors on the cell surface and within macrophages results in the release of an array of innate immune mediators (36). Mouse and human studies have shown that several innate mediators, such as vitamin D, macrophage migration-inhibitory factor (MIF), tumor necrosis factor (TNF), interleukin-1 (IL-1), IL-12, and IL-18, synergize with IFN- γ produced by innate immune cells, such as natural killer (NK) cells (37–41), to activate early antimicrobial activities in macrophages. While macrophage-derived antimicrobial resistance directly inhibits *M. tuberculosis* growth, tolerance mechanisms by macrophages protect the host from the negative impact of tissue damage. Several of these innate mediators are critical for host resistance against *M. tuberculosis*; however, their response needs to be finely balanced and tightly regulated to prevent immunopathology (42).

Bactericidal neutrophils likely also play an important part in limiting early infection, but their excessive buildup, typically seen in progressive lesions in postprimary TB, can contribute to tissue damage and need restraining (43). Innate lymphoid cells (ILCs) producing macrophage-activating granulocyte-macrophage colony-stimulating factor (GM-CSF) (44) and “unconventional” or “donor-unrestricted” T lymphocytes, such as mucosa-associated invariant T (MAIT), CD1-restricted, HLA-E-restricted, and $\gamma\delta$ T lymphocytes that reside in the interstitium, also likely play an important part in early defense upon infection (45, 46). Group 3 ILCs (ILC3s) producing IL-17 and IL-22 rapidly accumulate in the *M. tuberculosis*-infected lung; orchestrate chemokine production, which mediates the accumulation of alveolar macrophages; and induce lymphoid follicle formation. These ILC3s and ectopic lymphoid structures thus appear to participate in early protective immunity against TB (47). Airway-residing innate lymphocytes are ideally located to respond to pathogens very early, but it is unknown whether these cells play any significant role in immediate resistance following natural infection. Infection does not occur in all *M. tuberculosis*-exposed people, suggesting that natural innate immune mechanisms may clear bacteria in some individuals. However, in light of the global prevalence of humans with evidence of immune sensitization to *M. tuberculosis* (4), bacterial evasion of innate responses and the establishment of persistent infection without eradication appear to be hallmarks of *M. tuberculosis* infection.

Following the establishment of primary infection, infected dendritic cells (DCs) and recruited monocytes transport *M. tuberculosis* to draining lymph nodes (LNs), which initiate T-cell priming and acquired immunity (48, 49). The homing of activated T

lymphocytes to the site of infection in the lung interstitium contributes to granuloma structure and the control of *M. tuberculosis* infection (50, 51). T lymphocytes, in particular CD4⁺ T helper 1 (T_H1) lymphocytes, and IFN- γ produced by these cells are necessary to control *M. tuberculosis* (30). Inherited and acquired immunodeficiency in the constituents of the IFN- γ pathway is associated with exquisite susceptibility to mycobacterial disease, validating the central role of the T_H1 axis in resistance (52). IFN- γ stimulates enhanced antimycobacterial activities in macrophages, whereas TNF synergizes with IFN- γ in restraining *M. tuberculosis* growth and maintaining granuloma architecture (30). Other CD4⁺ T-lymphocyte subsets, notably those producing IL-17 (T_H17 cells) and IL-21, also participate in host resistance (53–55). While IL-17 aids in recruiting protective T_H1 cells at the site of infection (56), IL-21 augments the CD8⁺ T-cell response (55). CD8⁺ T lymphocytes that lyse infected macrophages and kill *M. tuberculosis* by producing cytotoxic molecules may contribute to protective immunity and possibly enforce long-term control (57).

M. tuberculosis infection elicits both effector and memory T cells. In people with LTBI, antigen-specific memory T cells predominantly exhibit a T_H1 phenotype and express multiple cytokines (58). Similarly, B lymphocytes produce antibodies in response to *M. tuberculosis* infection; however, a notion has long prevailed that antibodies and B cells play less significant roles in protection. This has been challenged recently by a number of studies that suggest that antigen-specific antibodies, and their functions, may contribute to immunity against *M. tuberculosis* (33, 34, 59, 60). Following this doctrine, TB vaccine research has focused largely on identifying strong IFN- γ /T_H1-inducing vaccine candidates for several years. Likewise, polyfunctional T cells that coexpress multiple T_H1 cytokines, such as IFN- γ , TNF, and IL-2, have been considered qualitatively superior to T cells expressing a single cytokine by many in the field and are being investigated with much interest in ongoing vaccine trials. However, definitive evidence that these cells are important components of protective immunity to *M. tuberculosis* is lacking (61).

Natural Immunity and Immunological Balance

Growing evidence suggests that the T_H1 axis, while necessary, is insufficient for protection. Both CD4⁺ T-cell- and IFN- γ -independent mechanisms of protection against TB exist (62). For example, during the first year after HIV infection, the risk of TB disease increases despite mostly normal CD4⁺ T-cell counts (63), and some simian immunodeficiency virus (SIV)-TB-coinfected macaques and HIV-TB-coinfected humans maintain LTBI without reactivation despite a severe loss of pulmonary and peripheral CD4⁺ T cells (64). In mice, CD4⁺ T cells can provide protection by IFN- γ - and TNF-independent mechanisms after infection or following vaccination (65, 66), and additional CD4⁺ T-cell effector functions likely account for resistance (67, 68). Resisters, who persistently test negative for *M. tuberculosis* infection and resist the development of classical LTBI and clinical TB disease, harbor non-IFN- γ CD4⁺ T-cell responses to *M. tuberculosis*-specific proteins, marked by high levels of CD40L/CD154 upregulation (21). These findings suggest that there are unique IFN- γ -independent mechanisms of protection in resisters that are not captured within the current clinical spectrum of disease (21). Although the T_H17 response participates in both primary and recall protection in mice (54, 56), an excess T_H17 response can also promote immunopathology and signal disease severity (69, 70). The same is true for excessive or uncontained IFN- γ expression, which can also promote immunopathology (67, 71). Pathological T_H17 responses may be counterregulated by T_H1 and B cells, whereas T_H2 and T regulatory (T_{REG}) cells can regulate proinflammatory T_H1 responses (72–74). Thus, while too little inflammation fails to control *M. tuberculosis* growth, too much of a proinflammatory response compromises adaptive immunity and leads to immunopathology. It follows that a fine balance between different immune cell subsets and their pro- and anti-inflammatory mediators is required to control *M. tuberculosis* (42).

Failure of the immune response to eliminate *M. tuberculosis* results in a continuum of infection. Although defined immunosuppressive mechanisms can cause progression

to active TB disease, a large number of apparently immunocompetent individuals also develop TB. In these individuals, sequential immune alterations characterize progression from infection to disease (75). Yet precipitating factors and the causal association of immunological changes that lead to the development of active TB disease are poorly understood. High-resolution lung imaging in people and monkeys has revealed that TB disease is highly heterogeneous, lung granulomas are very dynamic, and *M. tuberculosis* infection results in a broader spectrum of clinical stages than previously appreciated (76–78). However, within-host heterogeneity can be considerable, and the host-pathogen interaction proceeds differently in each individual lesion, exhibiting polymorphic and complex disease presentations. While some lesions become sterilized, others may progress, suggesting that different stage-specific *M. tuberculosis*-expressed antigens are concomitantly present in the lung and that critical immune responses must act at the level of each granuloma, which ultimately determines the clinical outcome of infection (76, 79, 80). A complete understanding of the molecular basis of *M. tuberculosis* clearance, control, or lack thereof within granulomas is thus necessary to inform more-rational development of effective TB vaccines.

Challenges to Natural Immunity

Most cases of TB develop soon, within 1 to 2 years, after an individual becomes infected with *M. tuberculosis* (81, 82), fueling ongoing transmission. However, reactivation many years after asymptomatic infection is an important challenge, and the immune mechanisms that prevent primary TB progression may well be different in nature from those that prevent reactivation TB. It is clearly very important to understand why immunity fails to control initial *M. tuberculosis* infection and why some people fail to maintain long-lasting protective immunity after *M. tuberculosis* infection. *M. tuberculosis* has coevolved with humans and clearly has developed numerous strategies to evade, tolerate, and undermine host immunity to establish persistence for decades so that reactivation at a later time in the form of reactivation pulmonary TB, typified by cavitary disease (83), can ensure transmission. Of course, humans have also adapted to the pathogen, leading to the fine balance between effective immune responses and *M. tuberculosis* survival. However, in some cases, environmental, genetic, and other precipitating factors likely swing the balance in favor of *M. tuberculosis*. How a vaccine can be designed to protect against these factors is difficult to fathom. An alternative (or additional) school of thought is that long-term chronic infection results in aberrant immune activation, dysregulation in immune pathways, and the accumulation of “terminally differentiated” effectors in the vasculature, leading to failed control and disease progression (84–86). Under this model, immunological tolerance likely plays a protective role, but T-cell hyperactivation and hyperproliferation compromise infection tolerance and ultimately precipitate the loss of critical T-cell function (87). Although definitive evidence for the existence of exhausted T cells in people with LTBI is lacking, such immune dysfunction may occur in both the lymphoid and myeloid compartments (84–86, 88). This is supported by mouse studies, which suggest that “less-differentiated” memory CD4⁺ T cells exert greater control of *M. tuberculosis* than “highly differentiated” effector T cells by their superior ability to proliferate, home to infected tissues, and perform many functions (86, 89, 90). Yet multiple metabolic and anatomical barriers (for example, aberrant angiogenesis and foamy macrophages) can restrict the infiltration of effector T cells into granulomas, and their defective positioning may limit the effectiveness of interactions with infected macrophages (91). However, interpretation of data from these studies and their relevance for human immunopathogenesis should take into account that such animal models typically model primary *M. tuberculosis* infection and do not recapitulate human disease progression with postprimary granulomas and fibrocaseous disease (83, 92).

Furthermore, in *M. tuberculosis*-infected and antibiotic-treated “memory-immune” mice, recall of CD4⁺ or CD8⁺ memory T-cell responses following reinfection fails to reduce the bacterial burden long-term or improve survival compared to primary responses (93). In subunit TB10.4 (EsxH)-vaccinated mice, the primary T-cell response

induced by *M. tuberculosis* infection upon challenge outnumbered the secondary memory CD8⁺ T-cell response, and the memory CD8⁺ T cells failed to afford protection (94). In humans and macaques, prior infection appears to be protective against reinfection progressing to TB disease (24, 26). However, people with prior TB disease can become *M. tuberculosis* infected again despite successful anti-TB treatment and in fact exhibit a higher risk of developing reinfection disease (95). Whether this failure is due to social, anatomical, or epidemiological factors or inherent or acquired immunological defects is unclear. In light of this, a prevailing notion is that attempts to reproduce responses to natural infection by vaccination will not be successful in these people and that new TB vaccines will likely need to induce “uncommon” or “unnatural” immunity that is superior to natural immunity. An example of such unnatural immunity is that induced following tetanus toxoid vaccination or by successful glycoconjugate vaccines where polysaccharides are covalently linked to proteins (96), since such responses are not observed after natural infection with the offending pathogen. The induction of unconventional HLA-E-restricted and major histocompatibility complex (MHC) class II-restricted CD8⁺ T-cell responses using genetically programmed cytomegalovirus (CMV)-vectored candidates is an example of uncommon immunity (97). Yet whether vaccine-induced protection over and above that afforded by natural immunity can be achieved by the induction of unnatural immunity remains unclear. It is noteworthy that recent results from the phase 2b trial of M72:AS01_E in *M. tuberculosis*-infected individuals (described below) suggest that vaccine boosting of T-cell and antibody responses primed by infection might protect against TB (10).

BCG, A FRAMEWORK TO UNDERSTAND TB IMMUNITY

The principle behind BCG vaccination entails priming “natural immunity” to mycobacterial antigens, mimicking natural infection of the host, to generate immunological memory that ensures accelerated responses after exposure to *M. tuberculosis*. However, despite inducing a strong T_H1 response, this vaccine has proven insufficient to control global TB epidemics, most likely because BCG does not consistently protect against pulmonary TB. Early studies investigating BCG-elicited protection informed us about T-cell-based mechanisms of immunity. More recently, we have learned about the nonspecific protection that it provides against general morbidity and mortality in infants from resource-limited counties (98). This heterologous beneficial effect against nontargeted diseases has been ascribed to effects on innate immune cell function, termed “trained immunity.” It relies, in part, on the epigenetic imprinting of stem cells and innate immune cells, such as monocytes and NK cells, that exhibit memory-like attributes (99–101), providing evidence for innate-immunity-mediated protection.

BCG Immunity and New TB Vaccine Candidates

BCG appears to be more efficacious in low-TB-incidence countries farther from the equator (102). BCG protection typically lasts 10 to 15 years, although two studies in low-incidence settings suggested that protection against pulmonary TB can last for many decades (103, 104). In high-TB-burden countries, the TB incidence peaks dramatically in young adults (105), suggesting an alteration or waning of BCG immunity that is triggered during puberty and persists through late adolescence. One underlying explanation for this effect could be that BCG preferentially induces a T effector memory (T_{EM}) response that is insufficiently long-lived or perhaps prone to attrition following chronic infection or repeated mycobacterial exposures common in these countries (106–108). TB epidemiology and disease diversity vary substantially between different age groups (109). In low-TB-incidence countries such as the United States that do not routinely vaccinate with BCG, the TB incidence also peaks in young adults (110), suggesting alternate, potential physiological or immunological changes or expansion of social networks and potential TB exposures. BCG, being a live vaccine, is generally not considered a good booster immunization, although this has not been systematically investigated in clinical trials. Two large, cluster-randomized clinical trials of BCG revaccination in Brazil and Malawi showed no efficacy against TB disease (111–113).

However, neither trial enrolled participants based on *M. tuberculosis* infection status, and infection status was not accounted for in efficacy analyses. Acquisition of *M. tuberculosis* infection was also not measured as an outcome during the trial periods. Studies of BCG-induced responses have predominantly focused on T cells, yet we do not know which aspects of BCG-elicited immune responses are most important for protection against *M. tuberculosis*. This has thwarted the development of modern TB vaccines.

The growing understanding is that the complex interplay between BCG, the human host, and the environment determines the nature of anti-TB immunity. Host genotypes; nutritional and metabolic status; environmental factors like smoking, microbiota, and coinfections; and the virulence and fitness of prevalent *M. tuberculosis* strains may all impinge on BCG immunity. Widespread environmental exposure to nontuberculous mycobacteria (NTM) appears to explain some of BCG's variable and short-lived protection in certain regions where TB is endemic. It has long been conjectured that prior NTM exposure "blocks" BCG replication and the induction of protective immunity or "masks" any protective effects of BCG, which fails to further boost NTM-induced background immunity (114, 115). A recent meta-analysis suggests that an absence of prior NTM sensitization or *M. tuberculosis* infection is associated with greater BCG efficacy against pulmonary TB (3). The prevailing hypothesis suggests that since NTM share a broad antigen repertoire with BCG and *M. tuberculosis* and elicit phenotypically similar T-cell responses (116), NTM sensitization leads to reduced BCG-induced immunity. In light of the long-standing disputes around this issue (117), defining the exact role of NTM in vaccination against TB is critically important, especially for live mycobacterial whole-cell vaccines.

Another potential limitation of BCG is the heterogeneity of its daughter strains, each of which has evolved in different institutions worldwide due to various mycobacterial culture conditions. One common feature of all BCG strains is the absence of 6-kDa early secretory antigenic target (ESAT-6) secretion system 1 (ESX-1), owing to the deletion of region of difference 1 (RD1) (118). The deletion of the RD1 locus, which encodes key virulence factors such as ESAT-6 and culture filtrate protein 10 (CFP-10), underlies the attenuation of the parental *M. bovis* strain. Five type VII secretion systems like ESX-1 are present in *M. tuberculosis* (118). Considering growing evidence of their role in immune evasion and virulence, these ESX systems are increasingly targeted for the development of live recombinant mycobacterial vaccines (119, 120), and the preferential recognition of ESX antigens by T cells following natural infection has made them attractive candidates for subunit vaccine development (121) (Fig. 2).

Compared with *M. tuberculosis*, ~120 genes are lost in BCG, and about 23% of the known human T-cell epitopes in *M. tuberculosis* are absent in BCG strains (122). Some BCG strains (Japan, Moreau, and Glaxo) also do not produce virulence surface lipids phthiocerol dimycocerosates (PDIMs) or phenolic glycolipids (PGLs). Whether diversity within and between strains contributes to the variable efficacy of BCG in clinical trials is unknown, but these strain differences generate variable immune responses in people and inconsistent protection in animal models (123–125). Therefore, BCG strain heterogeneity may likely have implications for new BCG boosting or supplementation strategies.

The loss of ESX-1 and virulence lipids in BCG has contributed greatly to our understanding of the pathobiology of *M. tuberculosis*, and vaccinologists have used this knowledge to pursue new vaccine leads. ESAT-6, PDIMs, and PGLs execute numerous immune evasion strategies in macrophages, including for phagosome rupture and cytosolic escape of *M. tuberculosis* and upregulation of responses detrimental to the host (for example, aberrant type I IFN levels) (126–128). From the host perspective, however, cytosolic escape of *M. tuberculosis* results in antigen processing through both class I and class II MHC pathways and the induction of CD8⁺ and CD4⁺ T-cell responses (129). BCG, which lacks ESX-1, remains restricted to the phagosome and induces a weaker CD8⁺ T-cell response (129). This knowledge has facilitated the engineering of recombinant BCG (rBCG) candidates with cytosolic-escape capability that appear more immunogenic and safer in immunocompromised hosts (130). The live-attenuated *M.*

tuberculosis vaccine candidate MTBVAC (Fig. 2) instead employs the strategy of attenuation by double deletions of the *phoP* and *fadD26* virulence genes, which leads to the complete abolishment of PDIM biosynthesis and defects in the ESX-1 system. MTBVAC therefore produces ESAT-6 but cannot export it, which results in decreased virulence yet improved protection in animal models (131).

To impede destruction in macrophages, *M. tuberculosis* has also evolved the capacity to inhibit protective mechanisms of innate immunity, such as phagosome acidification, phagosome-lysosome fusion, reactive oxygen and nitrogen species, apoptosis, and autophagy (126, 132). The most advanced rBCG vaccine in clinical trials, VPM1002 (Fig. 2), expresses listeriolysin from *Listeria monocytogenes*, while the urease C gene has been deleted. This promotes phagosome acidification, phagosome membrane perturbation, and the escape of antigens into the cytosol, enhancing immunogenicity and protection compared to parental BCG in mice (133). Deletion of the antiapoptotic gene *nuoG* from VPM1002 further appears to enhance protection against *M. tuberculosis* challenge in mice (134).

In *M. tuberculosis*-exposed people, it takes about 3 to 6 weeks before the tuberculin skin test turns positive (135). After *M. tuberculosis* infection of mice, accumulation of activated CD4⁺ T cells in the lung is also delayed, occurring between 14 and 21 days postinfection (48, 136–138). This delay is thought to be a part of the immune evasion strategies employed by *M. tuberculosis*, by hampering the migration of antigen-carrying DCs to draining LNs, by inhibiting antigen processing and presentation by antigen-presenting cells, and by inducing the early expansion of ESAT-6-specific T_{Reg} cells that impede naive T-cell priming (48, 136–138). Additional mechanisms are employed by *M. tuberculosis* to limit the efficacy of T cells and the adaptive immune response (139). It was recently suggested that in BCG- or subunit-vaccinated mice, a similar delay occurs in the initiation of recall of existing memory T-cell responses following *M. tuberculosis* challenge (140, 141). Since most humans who are exposed to *M. tuberculosis* already have mycobacterium-specific memory T cells due to neonatal BCG vaccination or NTM exposure, it is not clear to what degree this is an issue in humans.

TB VACCINES AND DESIRED IMMUNE RESPONSES

TB vaccines must induce responses to antigens that are expressed and presented during initial and later stages of *M. tuberculosis* infection. These responses must also reside in the appropriate tissue locations during the relevant infection stages. Unlike HIV and influenza virus, for which antigen variation is a major vaccination challenge, *M. tuberculosis* proteins that comprise the main targets of human T cells do not exhibit significant sequence variation. The implications of the conservation of T-cell epitopes for vaccine development are not fully understood (142, 143). Yet this phenomenon has fueled the theory that these immunodominant antigens deliberately drive persistent, robust T-cell responses which may act as “decoys” and divert the response from targeting the critical antigens (144). Exaggerated T_H1 responses may also benefit *M. tuberculosis*, the theory suggests, by promoting an inflammatory environment that facilitates tissue damage, expectoration, and aerosolization of the pathogen to drive transmission. In HIV-*M. tuberculosis*-coinfected individuals, the occurrence of cavitory disease is associated with larger numbers of circulating CD4⁺ T cells, supporting this possibility (145). This hypothesis must be considered in light of the knowledge that most *M. tuberculosis*-infected people have strong T_H1-cell responses to the same immunodominant T-cell epitopes, which do not appear to drive pathogenesis.

Taken together, our understanding of the T-cell responses required for effective control of *M. tuberculosis*, while avoiding immunopathology, has advanced considerably in recent years. To achieve control of *M. tuberculosis*, rational vaccine design should aim to elicit a balanced immune response that encompasses multiple components of pulmonary mucosal and systemic responses (Fig. 3). Since a single vaccine may not possess all “desired” attributes, multiple vaccines and combination approaches, such as heterologous boosting, may be required.

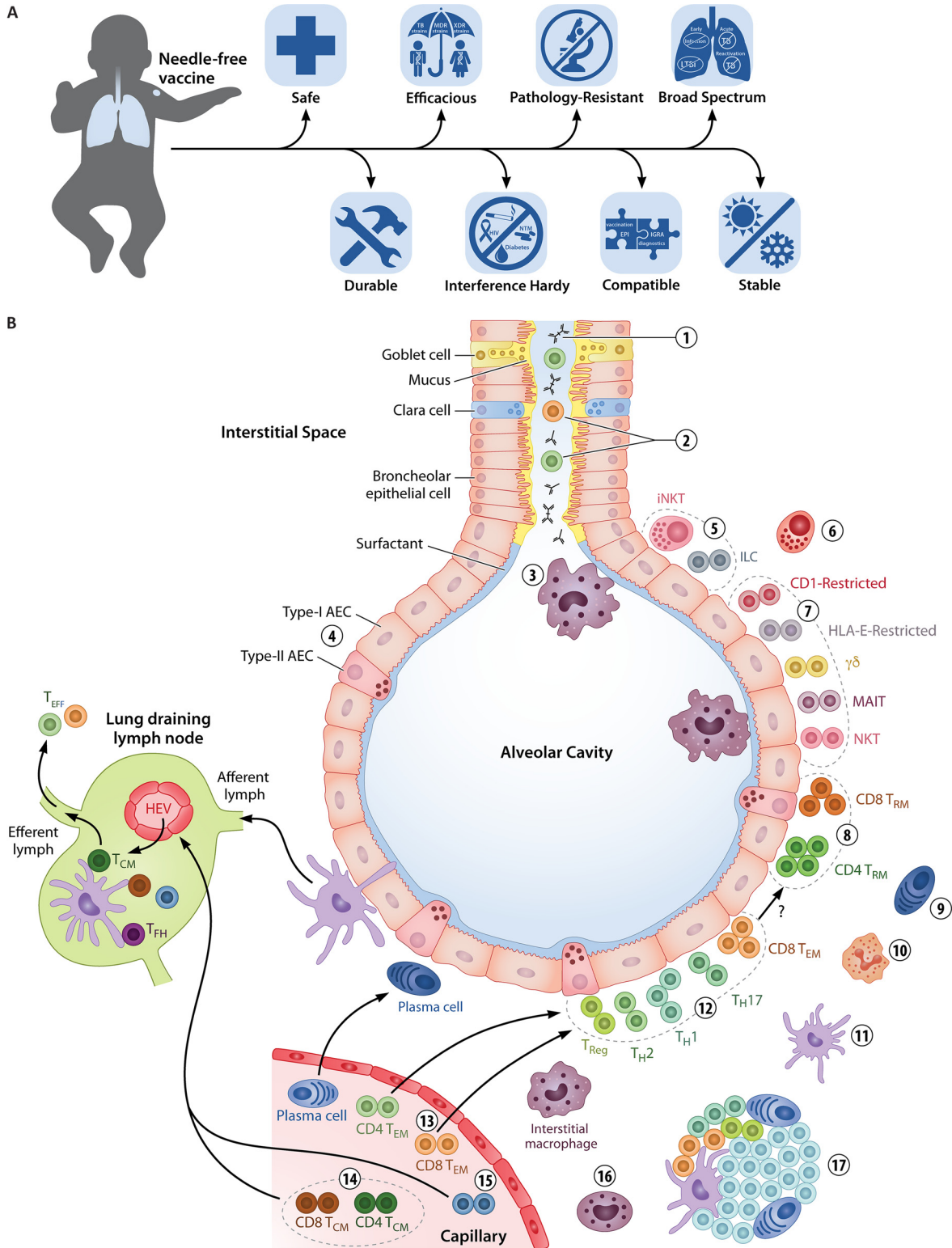


FIG 3 Tuberculosis vaccine and desired attributes. (A) Characteristics of an ideal TB vaccine. (B) An effective TB vaccine will likely need to engage multiple mechanisms and should aim to elicit a comprehensive immune response involving multiple arms of the immune system. Humoral and cell-mediated immunity may act at different points in time, or synergistically, to prevent *M. tuberculosis* infection and TB disease. Vaccine-elicited protective antibodies in the airways can prevent the establishment of infection or limit the acquisition of infection. Cytokines produced by airway-resident innate lymphocytes may equip alveolar macrophages with early bactericidal functions and recruit monocyte-derived macrophages to the site of infection. Yet *M. tuberculosis*, a “robust” intracellular pathogen, frequently succeeds in establishing a long-term infection in macrophages. Vaccine-elicited or trained innate lymphoid cells, NK cells, unconventional T cells, and

(Continued on next page)

C

‘Systems Immunology’ of ‘Desired’ TB Vaccine
1. Antibodies: Attachment and entry blocking, high-affinity, broadly neutralizing, FC effector function equipped complement-fixing, opsonophagocytic, antibody-dependent cell phagocytosis (ADCP) & antibody-dependent cell cytotoxicity (ADCC)-capable and <i>Mtb</i> killing.
2. Airway T cells: ↑ ‘innate-like’ sensing & early effector functions.
3. Alveolar macrophages: ↑ microbicidal capacity & ↑ trained-immunity.
4. Alveolar epithelial cells (AEC): ↑ surfactant & antimicrobial peptide production.
5. Innate lymphoid cells (ILC): ↑ ‘innate-like’ sensing & early anti- <i>Mtb</i> effector functions.
6. Natural killer (NK) cells: ‘Memory-like’ quick recall, ↑ trained-immunity & ↑ killer potential.
7. Unconventional T cells: Rapid recall & ↑ early anti- <i>Mtb</i> effector functions.
8. Tissue-resident memory T cells (T_{RM}): ↑ sensory and early anti- <i>Mtb</i> effector functions.
9. Plasma cells: Rapid antibody secretion & specificity against critical antigens.
10. Neutrophils: ↑↓ frequency and ↑microbicidal capacity.
11. Dendritic cells (DC): ↑↓ subset frequency, ↑activation & rapid migratory capacity to draining lymph node (LN). Increased antigen presentation by LN DCs.
12. Interstitial effector memory T cells (T_{EM}): Appropriately located, ↑↓ pro & anti-inflammatory subsets, sustained proliferation & ↑↓ multifunctional capacity without exhaustion.
13. Circulating T_{EM}/T_{EFF}: Lung and granuloma-homing, ↑↓ pro & anti-inflammatory subsets, sustained proliferation & ↑↓ multifunctional capacity without terminal differentiation.
14. Circulating central memory T cells (T_{CM}): Draining LN-homing, long-lived, rapid recall and generation of secondary effectors of crucial specificity that recognize <i>Mtb</i> -infected cells with low to intermediate TCR avidity.
15. Circulating memory B cells: Draining LN-homing, long-lived, rapid recall and generation of plasma cells of crucial specificity.
16. Monocytes: ↑↓ frequency & ↑ ‘trained-immunity.’
17. Lymphoid follicle: Local antigen-presentation niche?

FIG 3 (Continued)

T_{RM} cells at submucosa may act as sensory cells, recruit memory T cells, and/or act as early effectors to increase the kinetics of killing of *M. tuberculosis*-infected cells, leading to abortion of infection. Nevertheless, immune evasion strategies employed by *M. tuberculosis* likely present challenges for the prevention of infection, resulting in the establishment of infection in the interstitium. Induction of lymphoid follicles, as a local antigen presentation site, may be a desired feature of vaccination to reduce the bottleneck in delayed antigen presentation in draining LNs and impediment in the activation of T_{RM} and T_{EM} cells. Activated dendritic cells and other antigen-presenting cells during recall responses may rapidly initiate the activation of T_{CM} cells and memory B cells. TB vaccines will need to elicit long-lived memory T cells, and these memory T cells will need to rapidly expand and generate secondary effectors with a sustained proliferative and “functional” capacity. Primed effectors will need to be specific to critical antigens in the life cycle of *M. tuberculosis*, possess lung-homing potential, traffic to the infection site, recognize *M. tuberculosis*-infected cells, and resist terminal differentiation or exhaustion. Mucosal antibodies may prevent infection or reduce the severity of infection, host-damaging effects, and systemic dissemination. Effector T-cell responses must be capable of eliminating infection, or at least enforcing lifelong control of infection, while preserving delicate anatomical structures. This necessitates appropriately placed, tightly regulated, and highly balanced pro- and anti-inflammatory responses. Although pulmonary mucosal vaccination appears to be capable of inducing a protective local immune response, it must be safe for administration. (C) Desired attributes of immune responses (portrayed and listed in panel B) to be elicited by a “modern TB vaccine.” iNKT, invariant natural killer T cells; MAIT, mucosa-associated invariant T cells; HEV, high endothelial venules; FC, fragment crystallizable region of an antibody.

CURRENT TB VACCINE DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES

TB vaccine approaches can be broadly divided into prevention-of-infection (POI), prevention-of-disease (POD), prevention-of-recurrence (POR), or therapeutic vaccines to treat *M. tuberculosis* infection or TB disease. They are divided into live mycobacterial vaccines, subunit vaccines, and killed mycobacterial vaccines based on the platform used.

POI Vaccines

The POI vaccine, given preexposure, can prevent initial or sustained infection and is therefore thought to also protect against disease. As discussed above, several lines of evidence suggest that some people can resist infection despite repeated intense exposures (35), while BCG may also offer partial protection against infection (146, 147), providing the rationale for the POI approach (148). POI trials are smaller, shorter, and

less costly than POD trials, owing to the 8- to 10-fold-higher annual infection rates than TB disease rates in high-transmission settings (149). Such trials thus provide opportunities to study mechanisms of vaccine efficacy signals directly in humans, providing a platform to select lead candidates for further testing (149). A major challenge is that no tests are available to measure the acquisition, persistence, and clearance of asymptomatic *M. tuberculosis* infection directly. Current methods therefore rely on the detection of T-cell responses induced by infection, a process that takes 4 to 8 weeks. Furthermore, commercial IGRAs suffer from assay variability and uncertainty regarding the most effective assay cutoff (150). In addition, a vaccine candidate that cannot prevent infection might still protect against disease progression by inducing successful control of *M. tuberculosis* replication and would have a major impact on TB prevention. Conversely, a candidate that prevents infection in those individuals who, if infected, would in any case not progress to TB disease would have no or little impact on disease, transmission, and the TB epidemic (148). Despite these challenges, a recent landmark POI trial tested the ability of BCG revaccination or H4:IC31 subunit vaccination to prevent *M. tuberculosis* infection in healthy South African adolescents (9). H4:IC31 consists of a recombinant fusion protein (Hyvac-4) of TB10.4/EsxH and antigen 85B (Ag85B) in the IC31 adjuvant that signals through Toll-like receptor 9 (TLR9). Although neither vaccine showed efficacy based on the primary endpoint, namely, prevention of initial infection (QuantiFERON-TB gold in-tube [QFT] conversion at the manufacturer's cutoff), BCG revaccination significantly reduced the rate of sustained infection (QFT conversion followed by two consecutive QFT-positive results, 3 months apart, as a secondary endpoint), with an efficacy of 45.4% (95% confidence interval [CI], 6.4 to 68.1%), which might indicate the ability to help control or clear infection. BCG revaccination also showed an efficacy of 45.1% in preventing initial infection at a higher QFT cutoff of 4 IU/ml. Since QFT values above 4 IU/ml have been associated with a very high risk of TB disease in infants and adults (19, 151), this result further supports the hypothesis that BCG-induced immune responses might have promoted improved control of *M. tuberculosis* replication or perhaps even sterilization. H4:IC31 vaccination showed an efficacy of 30.5% (95% CI, -15.8 to 58.3%) in preventing sustained infection, which did not differ significantly from that of the placebo group (9). Therefore, H4:IC31 is no longer in further clinical evaluation. These results encourage POI trials of other candidates in the pipeline and warrant further evaluation of BCG revaccination in *M. tuberculosis*-uninfected individuals to determine if prevention of infection and subsequent progression to TB disease can be achieved. Potential barriers to BCG revaccination include existing contraindication in HIV-infected individuals and interference by prior NTM exposures in some settings.

POD Vaccines

A POD vaccine is given pre- and postexposure to protect against progression to TB disease. Epidemiological modeling suggests that an effective POD vaccine given to adolescents or young adults will have the fastest and largest impact on the global TB epidemic by interrupting transmission (152). Although most candidates in ongoing clinical trials (Fig. 2) aim to prevent TB disease, POD trials are larger, longer, and more costly than POI trials, owing to the lower rate of TB disease endpoints (149). To address this, the recent phase 2b POD trial of the candidate M72:AS01_E subunit vaccine in South Africa, Kenya, and Zambia was conducted only with IGRA-positive individuals, a population with enriched TB case accrual. In an endpoint-triggered interim analysis of this trial, comprising 3,283 adults, the incidence of pulmonary TB was significantly lower in the M72:AS01_E group than in the placebo group after a mean follow-up period of 2.3 years. The 54% vaccine efficacy reported in this trial establishes for the first time the proof of principle of vaccine-induced protection against clinical TB disease among persons already infected with *M. tuberculosis*. Although the observed confidence intervals are wide (95% CI, 2.9 to 78.2%), this proof-of-concept study supports further evaluation of M72:AS01_E. These results defy widespread skepticism of the feasibility of such a vaccine for the POD indication in IGRA-positive people and represent an

important advance. The final analyses of clinical data from this trial are slated to be released in late 2019. Because this trial included *M. tuberculosis*-infected adults who were predominantly BCG vaccinated, it was not possible to determine the extent to which infection-generated or childhood BCG vaccination-elicited responses influenced vaccine efficacy; additionally, the trial was not designed to determine whether M72:AS01_E can protect against *M. tuberculosis* infection. The global vaccination strategy would ideally target both *M. tuberculosis*-infected and -uninfected individuals, avoiding the need for IGRAs. Because the lack of efficacy among IGRA-positive individuals might halt further clinical development of candidates in the pipeline with potential efficacy against infection, inclusion of both uninfected and infected individuals in future trials would be necessary.

POR Vaccines and Therapeutic Vaccines

Vaccines that aim to prevent recurrent TB (POR vaccines) are administered during or after TB treatment to prevent recurrence after cure. Therapeutic vaccines are administered as an adjunct to drug treatment to increase the effectiveness of treatment and shorten the duration of TB treatment. Since treated TB patients are at a severalfold-higher risk of recurrent TB disease than matching community controls, the POR design achieves endpoint accrual with a much smaller sample size, providing a compelling rationale for POR vaccines (95). TB recurrence occurs in about 2 to 8% of TB patients after completion of treatment by relapse or reinfection, depending on the treatment effectiveness and transmission rates, and ~70 to 90% of this recurrent disease occurs within 1 year of treatment completion (153). As recurrent disease accrual is greater and faster, POR trials are usually smaller and shorter than POD trials (149), but these trials are complex in design. TB treatment is 6 to 24 months long, arduous, and very costly, depending on drug-susceptible or -resistant disease. Furthermore, as an immunotherapeutic adjunct to chemotherapy, POR vaccines may simplify, increase the effectiveness of, or possibly shorten the duration of TB treatment. A therapeutic vaccine may also ameliorate disease severity, reduce treatment failures, and have a major impact on the personal, logistical, and financial burden of TB treatment. POR candidates that prevent relapse and reinfection may also prevent reactivation and could signal an expansion of testing from a POR trial into a larger POD trial. Candidates currently being tested for POR include the H56:IC31 and ID93:GLA-SE subunit vaccines, which were shown to prevent reactivation or limit disease severity in nonhuman primates (NHPs) (154, 155), as well as the rBCG vaccine candidate VPM1002 (see below). They are currently in phase 2 or 3 POR trials in TB patients during or after completion of treatment (Fig. 2).

Live Mycobacterial Vaccines

The BCG vaccine is given to healthy neonates at birth in many countries but is contraindicated in HIV-infected infants. New viable mycobacterial vaccines aiming to replace BCG include rBCG strains and recombinant *M. tuberculosis* deletion mutants such as VPM1002 and MTBVAC, respectively. An evaluation of VPM1002 in a phase 2a trial in HIV-exposed infants in South Africa was recently completed, without any safety concerns. This trial was initiated following extensive preclinical evaluations and demonstration of safety and immunogenicity in healthy infants and adults (Fig. 4) (156–158). If proven safer than BCG in HIV-exposed and -unexposed infants in a planned phase 3 trial, VPM1002 may be the first new vaccine to enter the market since BCG, even if it is not found to be more efficacious than BCG. VPM1002 is also being evaluated in cured TB patients in India, to prevent recurrence (ClinicalTrials.gov identifier NCT03152903), a phase 2/3 trial that is slated to conclude in 2020. VPM1002 is also being investigated for immunotherapy in bladder cancer patients in Switzerland (ClinicalTrials.gov identifier NCT02371447).

MTBVAC was found to be safe in a “first-in-human” trial in healthy Swiss adults (159) and in a recently completed phase 2 trial in South African adults and newborns (ClinicalTrials.gov identifier NCT02729571) (160). In the latter trial, MTBVAC immunogenicity and its effects on IGRA conversion and reversion were also investigated in

	Vaccine	Mice/NHPs	Infants	Adolescents/Adults
BCG	 BCG	<p>IFN-γ*TNF-α* IL-17*TNF-α*; IL-17* IFN-γ* • Mycobacteria-specific polyfunctional T_H1 and T_H17 cells • Enduring CD4⁺ T_H1 • Partial protection in mice and NHPs</p>	<p>IFN-γ*TNF-α* IL-17* IFN-γ* • Mycobacteria-specific polyfunctional T_H1 response • Short-lived CD4⁺ T_H1 • Partial protection</p>	<p>T_H1 T_H17 CD8+ IFN-γ* IL-17* IFN-γ* • Mycobacteria-specific monofunctional T_H1 response • Waned/alterned T_H1 • Variable (0-80%) efficacy against TB. Partial (45.5%) efficacy against sustained infection on revaccination</p>
(Replacement vaccine)	 VPM1002	<p>IFN-γ*IL-2*TNF-α* IL-17* IFN-γ* • Greater mycobacteria-specific T_H1, T_H17, and CD8⁺ T-cell response compared to BCG in mice • Greater CD4⁺ T_H1 response • Enhanced protection in mice</p>	<p>IFN-γ*IL-2*TNF-α*; TNF-α* IL-17* IL-2* • Weak T-cell response and no significant difference compared to BCG • T-cell memory? • Protection?</p>	<p>T_H1 NI CD8+ IFN-γ*; TNF-α* IFN-γ* • No significant difference in T_H1 or CD8⁺ T-cell response compared to BCG following vaccination in adults. • Serum anti-PPD antibodies • T-cell memory? • Protection?</p>
(Replacement vaccine)	 AERAS 422	<p>T_H1 NI CD8+ IFN-γ*; PNI IFN-γ* • Greater mycobacteria or immunogen-specific T_H1, and CD8⁺ T-cell response compared to BCG in mice • T-cell memory? • Protection comparable to BCG in mice</p>	Not Investigated	<p>T_H1 NI CD8+ IFN-γ*; PNI IFN-γ*/BDL • No significant difference in T_H1 or CD8⁺ T-cell response compared to BCG • T-cell memory? • Varicella zoster virus reactivation (dropped from further evaluation)</p>
(Replacement vaccine)	 MTBVAC	<p>IFN-γ*; PNI IL-17* IFN-γ* • Greater mycobacteria-specific T_H1, T_H17, and CD8⁺ T-cell response compared to BCG in mice • T-cell memory? • Enhanced protection in mice and NHPs</p>	<p>• Trial (NCT02729571) recently completed • Tameris et al; (Lancet Respir Med, 2019) • Magnitude of polyfunctional CD4⁺ T cell responses exceeds BCG responses, no significant CD8⁺ T cell responses, and MTBVAC results in IGRA conversion.</p>	<p>T_H1 NI CD8+ IFN-γ* TNF-α* IFN-γ* • No significant difference in T_H1 or CD8⁺ T-cell response compared to BCG in preliminary studies. • Comparable T-cell memory • Protection?</p>
(pre-exposure POD vaccine)	 MVA85A	<p>IFN-γ*IL-2*TNF-α* IL-17*; IL-17*IFN-γ* IFN-γ*TNF-α* • Increased immunogen-specific polyfunctional T_H1 and T_H17 response • CD4⁺ mixed T_H1 and T_H17 response • Variable protection in mice and NHPs</p>	<p>IFN-γ*IL-2*TNF-α* IL-17* • Weak immunogen-specific T-cell response despite T_H1 polyfunctional profile • Durable CD4⁺ mixed T_H1 and T_H17 response (at least over 6 y) • No protection</p>	<p>IFN-γ*IL-2*TNF-α*; IFN-γ*TNF-α* IL-17*; IL-17*IFN-γ* IFN-γ* • Increased immunogen-specific polyfunctional T_H1 and T_H17 response • CD4⁺ mixed T_H1 and T_H17 response • Protection?</p>
(pre-exposure POD vaccine)	 AERAS 402	<p>IFN-γ*IL-2*TNF-α* IFN-γ*TNF-α* • Increased immunogen-specific polyfunctional CD8⁺ T-cell and T_H1 response • CD8⁺ and CD4⁺ T_H1 response • Enhanced protection in mice but not in NHPs</p>	<p>IFN-γ*IL-2*TNF-α* IFN-γ*TNF-α* • Weak immunogen-specific CD8⁺ T-cell and T_H1 response • CD8⁺ and CD4⁺ T_H1 response • Efficacy trial discontinued</p>	<p>IFN-γ*IL-2*TNF-α*; IFN-γ*TNF-α* IFN-γ*TNF-α* • Robust immunogen-specific polyfunctional CD8⁺ T-cell response that fails to recognize infected cells <i>in vitro</i> • CD8⁺ and CD4⁺ T_H1 response in uninfected volunteers • Protection?</p>
(pre & post-exposure POD vaccine)	 M72:AS01 _E	<p>IFN-γ*IL-2*TNF-α*; IL-2*TNF-α* IL-17* IFN-γ* • Immunogen-specific polyfunctional T_H1 response • CD4⁺ T_H1 response • Enhanced protection in mice and NHPs</p>	<p>IL-2*; IL-2* TNF-α* IL-17* IFN-γ* • Weak immunogen-specific T-cell response despite T_H1 polyfunctional profile • CD4⁺ T_H1 response • Protection?</p>	<p>IL-2*TNF-α* (uninfected); IFN-α*TNF-α*; IFN-γ* (infected) IL-17* IFN-γ* • Robust immunogen-specific polyfunctional T_H1 response, transient PD-1⁺ expression and Ki67⁺ cells lacking cytokine production, and high IgG response. • CD4⁺ T_H1 response in Mtb-infected and T_H17 response in uninfected volunteers • Partial protection (54%) against TB disease in Mtb infected</p>
(POI, POD & POR vaccine)	 H1/H4/H56:IC31/CAF01	<p>IFN-γ*IL-2*TNF-α*; IL-2*TNF-α* IL-17* IFN-γ* • Immunogen-specific polyfunctional T_H1 and T_H17 response (H56:CAF01) • CD4⁺ T_H1 response that resist terminal differentiation postchallenge • Enhanced protection in mice (POD vaccine) and inconsistent protection in NHPs</p>	<p>• H4:IC31 trial (NCT01861730) recently completed • Results not yet published</p>	<p>IL-2*TNF-α* (uninfected); IFN-γ* (infected) • Immunogen-specific polyfunctional T_H1 response, CAF01 generated T_H17 did not mirror in humans • Significance of immunogen-specific T-cell differentiation in protection is unknown • No significant efficacy (30.5%) against sustained infection in adolescents (H4:IC31)</p>
(POD & POR vaccine)	 ID93:GLA-SE	<p>IFN-γ*; IFN-γ*TNF-α* IL-17* • Immunogen-specific polyfunctional T_H1 response • CD4⁺ T_H1 response • Enhanced protection in mice (POD vaccine) and in NHPs (therapeutic vaccine)</p>	Not Intended	<p>IL-2*TNF-α* (uninfected); IFN-γ*IL-2*TNF-α* (infected) • Polyfunctional T_H1 response and T-cell differentiation varied between antigens of ID93 and high levels of IgG antibodies. • Mixed T_H1 and T_H17 response • Protection?</p>
(Therapeutic vaccine)	 Killed <i>Mycobacterium indicus pranii</i> (MIP)	<p>IFN-γ*; PNI IFN-γ* • Increased mycobacteria-specific T_H1 response as an adjunct to chemotherapy. Multiple doses decreased inflammatory and increased anti-inflammatory response; increased CD8⁺ T-cells in granulomas compared to chemotherapy alone • T-cell memory? • Enhanced beneficial therapeutic effect in mice and guinea pigs</p>	Not Intended	<p>IFN-γ*; PNI IFN-γ* • Mycobacteria-specific T_H1 response not significant compared to placebo group • T-cell memory? • Culture conversion but not sputum-smear conversion in significant number of pulmonary TB patients. Increased relapse in MIP group compared to placebo • No therapeutic advantage against TB pericarditis • Inconsistent/no protection</p>

FIG 4 Distinct features of T-cell responses to TB vaccine candidates and disparities between responses in animal models and humans. TB vaccine candidates elicit CD4⁺ and CD8⁺ T-cell responses with distinct functional profiles, although these responses differ between animal studies and clinical (Continued on next page)

infants, demonstrating a promising induction of mycobacterium-specific CD4⁺ T cells that expressed IFN- γ , TNF, and IL-2. Two additional phase 2 trials of MTBVAC in South African newborns and adults are under way (ClinicalTrials.gov identifiers NCT03536117 and NCT02933281). Safety is a critically important consideration for such live mycobacterial candidates, since less-attenuated strains may persist longer *in vivo* and exhibit unacceptable adverse events despite being highly immunogenic. For example, the rBCG vaccine AERAS-422, which expresses Ag85A, Ag85B, and Rv3407 together with perfringolysin, faced termination because two vaccine recipients in a phase 1 clinical trial presented with shingles (8) (Fig. 4). Further clinical evaluation of another candidate, rBCG30, which overexpresses Ag85B, was halted despite increased antigen-specific T-cell responses in healthy adults compared to BCG (161), following disappointing results in the MVA85A and AERAS-422 trials. Although live vaccines may induce a broad and relatively enduring immune response, the concern also exists that repeated environmental mycobacterial exposures may block, mask, or alter their effect, as has been reported for BCG (162). Since it would be unethical to withhold BCG, which saves thousands of lives annually by preventing disseminated and severe forms of TB, efficacy trials to evaluate such candidates in infants also pose regulatory and ethical challenges. Yet BCG is the comparator in a planned efficacy trial of VPM1002 in infants, and some of these candidates are being considered for “simultaneous vaccination” with BCG or as a BCG booster vaccine (163).

Subunit Vaccines

Subunit vaccine candidates aim to boost BCG-primed responses and include virus-vectored or adjuvanted recombinant proteins. The first subunit candidate to enter clinical trials was MVA85A, which delivered immunodominant *M. tuberculosis* Ag85A via a modified vaccinia virus Ankara (MVA) vector. Despite being safe and immunogenic in different populations and age groups in early trials (164–167), phase 2b efficacy trials of MVA85A did not demonstrate vaccine efficacy (6, 7). In the first efficacy trial carried out in BCG-vaccinated South African infants, boosting with MVA85A did not show significant improvement over BCG in preventing *M. tuberculosis* infection or TB disease (6) (Fig. 4) despite inducing Ag85A-specific T_H1 and T_H17 responses. MVA85A-induced T_H1 responses were later found to persist for over 6 years, indicating a highly enduring response (168). In the second efficacy trial carried out with HIV-infected adults, MVA85A also enhanced Ag85A-specific T_H1 responses (7) but yet again showed no efficacy against *M. tuberculosis* infection or disease compared to placebo. However, the latter trial was stopped early in light of the infant trial results and thus did not accrue the endpoints required for necessary statistical power. Several factors are speculated to have contributed to the failure of MVA85A to provide protection, including the use of

FIG 4 Legend (Continued)

trials. The sizes of the colored circles indicate relative magnitudes of specific T_H1, T_H17, and CD8⁺ T-cell responses induced. The quality of the response with the dominant cytokine-producing subset(s) is described. NI, not investigated; PNI, polyfunctionality not investigated; BDL, below the detection limit. In mice and NHPs, parental BCG induces polyfunctional T_H1 and T_H17 responses and affords partial protection against *M. tuberculosis* challenge (108, 199, 224). No correlation was found between the magnitudes or polyfunctional profiles of BCG-specific T cells and protection against pulmonary TB in South African infants (225). Interestingly, a BCG-specific IFN- γ ELISPOT response was found to be associated with a reduced risk of TB in the same settings (171). BCG-elicited immune responses and protection wane over time in settings where TB is endemic (3, 105, 107), but BCG revaccination improves protection against sustained *M. tuberculosis* infection in adolescents (9). The live BCG replacement vaccine candidates VPM1002, AERAS-422, and MTBVAC induce broad immune responses, including increased polyfunctional CD4⁺ and CD8⁺ T-cell responses and improved protection in mice relative to BCG (131, 133, 156, 226), but in clinical trials, polyfunctional T-cell responses did not differ significantly from those induced by BCG (8, 157–159). MTBVAC induces antigen-specific polyfunctional CD4⁺ T-cell responses at magnitudes that exceed those induced by BCG in infants, but no significant CD8⁺ T-cell responses are induced, and MTBVAC also results in IGRA conversion. BCG booster subunit candidates increase immunogen-specific CD4⁺ and/or CD8⁺ T-cell responses in mice and improve protection. However, inconsistent protection in NHPs (MVA85A, Ad35Ag85A/AERAS-402, Ad5Ag85A, and H1/H4/H56) (26, 155, 181, 182, 227, 228) and relatively low-level immune responses in BCG-vaccinated infants (MVA85A, AERAS-402, and M72) (165–167, 177, 229, 230) compared to those in adults were observed for some candidates. In clinical trials, MVA85A failed to improve protection against *M. tuberculosis* infection or disease despite increased polyfunctional T_H1 and T_H17 responses (6, 168), and AERAS-402-induced polyfunctional CD8⁺ and CD4⁺ T cells failed to recognize *M. tuberculosis*-infected target cells (180). Unlike BCG-elicited responses, adjuvanted subunit candidates predominantly induce IL-2-coexpressing polyfunctional CD4⁺ T-cell subsets that correlate with enhanced protection in mice (183, 188, 191), but the role of these subsets in human protection is unclear, and the relevance of varying immunogenicity of antigenic components in subunit vaccine candidates for protection is unknown (231, 232). MIP elicits beneficial effects in *M. tuberculosis*-infected animal models as a therapeutic vaccine, but in clinical trials, it provided ambiguous benefits in TB patients (196–198).

a single antigen, hypimmune responsiveness in infants, immunological interference by EPI vaccines, boosting at the peak of the BCG response, immunosuppression in HIV-infected adults, decreased Ag85A expression after *M. tuberculosis* infection, and reduced Ag85A availability in the lungs during chronic infection (89, 169–174). Nonetheless, these results ignited intense and valuable debate in the TB field surrounding prevalent paradigms of protective immunity and vaccination strategies for TB. This led to the reconsideration of boosting prior IFN- γ /T_H1 responses with newer TB vaccines (62, 175) and emphasized the need for more-stringent preclinical efficacy data for advancing only “best-in-class” candidates to late-stage clinical trials. Of significance is that it shifted the focus within the vaccine development community to preventing reactivation TB in adolescents/adults, to interrupt *M. tuberculosis* transmission. Additional clinical trials that will address some of these questions are under way, including combination boosting using simian adenovirus (Ad)- and MVA-vectored Ag85A vaccines by the aerosol route (Fig. 2). Combination boosting by the systemic route using simian adenovirus- and MVA-vectored Ag85A vaccines (ClinicalTrials.gov identifier NCT01829490) and alternate aerosol and systemic immunizations using an MVA-vectored Ag85A vaccine (ClinicalTrials.gov identifier NCT01954563) were found to be safe and immunogenic in healthy BCG-vaccinated adults (176). Since BCG elicits a weak CD8⁺ T-cell response, dominant CD8⁺ T-cell-response-inducing replication-deficient adenovirus vector platforms also underwent clinical evaluations as novel BCG booster vaccines. These candidates include adenovirus serotype 35 (Ad35) expressing *M. tuberculosis* antigens Ag85A, Ag85B, and TB10.4 (AERAS-402) and human adenovirus serotype 5 expressing Ag85A (Ad5Ag85A) (177–179). Even though preexisting antivector immunity in the trial populations did not dampen the strength of the booster response, Ad-platform-induced CD8⁺ T cells either failed to recognize *M. tuberculosis*-infected human targets or failed to provide significant protection over and above BCG in NHPs (180–182) (Fig. 4). Consequently, the Ad35 candidate is no longer being pursued, but the Ad5 candidate is still in clinical development (179). Another recombinant virus-vectored candidate in clinical development, TB/FLU-04L, employs a live-attenuated influenza A virus vector to express *M. tuberculosis* antigens Ag85A and ESAT-6 (Fig. 2). Similar to the FluMist vaccine, TB/FLU-04L is delivered by the intranasal route. This delivery platform was found to be safe and immunogenic in healthy BCG-vaccinated, QFT-negative adults in a phase 1 trial in Kazakhstan (ClinicalTrials.gov identifier NCT02501421). An additional phase 2a POD trial of TB/FLU-04L is currently planned for QFT-positive adults.

Fusion protein-adjuvant formulations currently in clinical evaluation include M72:AS01_E, H56:IC31, ID93:GLA-SE, and GamTBvac (Fig. 2). H56 and an earlier version, comprising Ag85B and ESAT-6 (H1), were safe and immunogenic when combined with the IC31 or CAF01 adjuvant, as pre- or postexposure vaccines (183–186). H1 is no longer in the clinical pipeline. M72:AS01_E, H56:IC31, and ID93:GLA-SE are being investigated for multiple indications, including therapeutic/POR, POD, and/or POI. GamTBvac is a new vaccine formulation consisting of two *M. tuberculosis* antigen fusions of Ag85A and ESAT6–CFP-10 with the dextran-binding domain immobilized on dextran and mixed with an adjuvant consisting of a DEAE-dextran core and CpG oligodeoxynucleotides (TLR9 agonist) (187). The safety and immunogenicity of GamTBvac are currently being evaluated in a phase 2a trial in healthy BCG-vaccinated adults (ClinicalTrials.gov identifier NCT03878004), following successful clinical evaluation in a phase 1 trial in Russia (ClinicalTrials.gov identifier NCT03255278). The excellent safety profiles, well-defined molecular compositions, absence of vector-directed immunity facilitating prime-boosting, and depot-forming slow-antigen-release effects that induce durable responses make such subunit formulations attractive. They are amenable to adjustments to influence the type of immune response induced or to modulate preexisting immunity. However, the use of multiple antigens and complex formulations can make them challenging for good manufacturing practice (GMP) and evaluations. Although prior mycobacterial exposure might not block or mask the subunit vaccines, they will need to improve upon the protection afforded by BCG and NTM exposures. These subunit vaccines induce

memory T-cell subsets distinct from those induced by BCG, specifically by inducing IL-2- and TNF-coexpressing T cells that are less differentiated than BCG-induced effector CD4⁺ T cells, which express mostly IFN- γ and little TNF and IL-2 (183–186, 188–190) (Fig. 4). Murine experiments suggest that these less-differentiated T-cell responses may provide greater efficacy than BCG (188, 191), but the role of these T-cell subsets in human protection remains unclear. In *M. tuberculosis*-infected individuals, however, the frequencies of these IL-2- and TNF-coexpressing CD4⁺ T-cell subsets decrease, and those of the IFN- γ -expressing subsets increase, suggesting that underlying *M. tuberculosis* infection can impact the attributes of the subunit vaccine-elicited memory T-cell response (192).

Killed Mycobacterial Vaccines

Killed mycobacterial vaccine preparations in clinical trials include RUTI, DAR-901, *Mycobacterium vaccae*, and *Mycobacterium indicus pranii* (MIP) (Fig. 2). RUTI is a liposomal formulation containing fragmented, detoxified *M. tuberculosis* grown under stress. As a potential therapeutic vaccine, it was found to be safe and immunogenic in persons with LTBI when administered 1 month after isoniazid treatment (ClinicalTrials.gov identifier NCT01136161). It is under evaluation in HIV-infected and non-HIV-infected persons with LTBI for POD (193), and an additional trial in persons with multidrug-resistant TB is planned (ClinicalTrials.gov identifier NCT02711735). DAR-901, a broth-grown preparation of *Mycobacterium obuense*, is currently in a phase 2b POI trial in BCG-vaccinated adolescents in Tanzania. The efficacy data from this trial are expected in 2020. It is also under evaluation in HIV-infected TB patients as a therapeutic vaccine. SRL172, an earlier agar-grown *M. obuense* preparation, was evaluated in the first phase 3 efficacy trial conducted since BCG (194). Results of this trial suggested that multidose SRL172 vaccination provides some protection against HIV-associated TB (39% reduction in culture-confirmed cases; hazard ratio, 0.61 [95% CI, 0.39 to 0.96]) in BCG-vaccinated adults (194). Yet the development of SRL172 faced challenges due to nonscalability. Several studies have also investigated killed *M. vaccae* and lysates thereof as an adjunct to antibiotic treatment, including in HIV-coinfected persons (195), and *M. vaccae* and MIP preparations are currently in phase 3 POD trials in China and India, respectively. Although efficacy data from the multidose *M. vaccae* (Vaccae) vaccine trial in TST-positive adults were expected in 2016, the status of this trial has not been verified in 2 years (ClinicalTrials.gov identifier NCT01979900). While *M. vaccae* is already licensed as an adjunctive therapeutic vaccine in TB patients in China, MIP is licensed as a leprosy vaccine in India. A clinical trial of MIP in household contacts of TB patients for POD indication is under way in India. However, efficacy signals provided by *M. vaccae* and MIP preparations as therapeutic vaccines are not definitive (Fig. 4) (196–198), and results from ongoing trials are eagerly anticipated.

Limitations of Current Vaccine Approaches

A limitation of current vaccine approaches is that they utilize a limited number of concepts and vaccine classes. Most focus on inducing “conventional” T_H1 immunity and include a limited repertoire of immunodominant target antigens, mainly belonging to the Ag85 and ESAT-6 family of secreted proteins (Fig. 2). The observation in mice that antigen availability limits the protective immunity conferred by Ag85B-specific T cells during chronic infection, whereas functional exhaustion limits immunity by ESAT-6-specific T cells (89), highlights challenges in the development of vaccines using these proteins. The functional attributes of memory T-cell responses induced by six-subunit vaccine candidates in clinical trials were highly similar, which suggests a lack of diversity (Fig. 4) (192). Since *M. tuberculosis* epitope-specific natural T-cell responses are highly heterogeneous and more than several dozen antigens are required to cover 80% of the total CD4⁺ T-cell response, it is possible that current vaccine approaches using few antigens may not induce natural immunity of sufficient strength and breadth (58, 174). On the contrary, poorly recognized antigens during natural infection, termed unnatural antigens by some, may simply not be recognized by the immune system during

infection, and their role in protection is unclear (174). Results from the M72:AS01_E trial in humans and a recent study of pulmonary BCG vaccination in NHPs suggest that meaningful protection can be achieved (10, 199). The NHP study suggests that mycobacterium-specific T_H1 cells in the lung that coexpress IL-17 (termed T_H1/T_H17 cells), along with the expression of IL-10 by lung cells and mycobacterium-specific IgA antibodies, can protect against infection and disease (199). These findings warrant further investigation of the role of mucosal vaccination and provide novel putative correlates of protection that can be tested as hypotheses in human studies. In addition, new vaccine concepts that exploit immunological and antigenic diversity need exploration. Such approaches may include the induction of uncommon immunity mediated by antibodies and/or donor-unrestricted T cells that recognize antigens other than classical peptides (31, 32, 45). The role of uncommon immune responses induced by novel posttranslationally modified antigens in protection versus pathology also needs investigation (200–203). New vaccine concepts that elicit memory T cells capable of sustainable expansion upon encountering *M. tuberculosis*-infected cells in the lung should be explored (140). Since long-lived memory T cells may arise from a subset of effector cells, characterization of such memory precursor effectors is essential (204). A head-to-head comparison of clinical-grade adjuvants and their abilities to induce protective pulmonary responses is also needed. The overall efficacy of M72:AS01_E suggests that the adjuvant may be critical, while the importance of the immunogens is not clear from the M72:AS01_E results. Whether the efficacy of M72 can be increased by the incorporation of additional protective antigens will need further investigation in different populations. In addition to the induction of host resistance, vaccines that induce infection tolerance and preserve lung function also need evaluation. A combination of approaches could also be explored, for example, by combining BCG revaccination in uninfected adolescents with M72:AS01_E boosting to protect against infection and to prevent disease progression. In the absence of a clear target, adaptive trial designs will likely be the most efficient strategy.

KEY UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

A significant obstacle in TB vaccine development is a lack of correlates of protection or host biomarkers that reliably predict the level of protection induced. In the absence of a clear understanding of which immune responses new vaccines should induce for improved protection, assessments of immunogenicity of new vaccines in ongoing trials remain a measure of “vaccine take” rather than protective immunity. Past vaccine development efforts therefore relied mainly on the assessment of parameters that are presumed important for protection (for example, IFN- γ) (62, 175, 205). Previously completed efficacy trials that did not observe vaccine efficacy have led to a better understanding of correlates of risk. For example, a *post hoc* analysis of the MVA85A trial revealed that T-cell activation and differentiation and an elevated blood monocyte/lymphocyte ratio are associated with an increased risk of developing TB disease, whereas elevated Ag85A-specific IgG titers and frequencies of BCG-specific total IFN- γ -expressing cells measured by an enzyme-linked immunosorbent spot (ELISPOT) assay correlated with a reduced risk (171). Recently, a number of correlates of risk have been identified, although none are specific for TB, and many indicate that innate inflammation or immune activation is elevated during disease progression, likely by detecting incipient or subclinical disease (11, 13, 75). This suggests that these correlates of risk are likely different than the antigen-specific correlates of protection (206). Of course, it is expected that such correlates of protection will interact with correlates of risk, especially in the light of the latter being inflammatory signals that could interfere with vaccine take/efficacy or indicators that disease progression is already at an advanced stage. Stored samples from participants who were protected and those who were not in recent vaccine trials with significant efficacy (9, 10) have the potential to reveal correlates of protection in humans.

It is possible, even likely, that correlates of protection for a neonatal vaccine and those for an adolescent/adult vaccine will be different, and two sets of preferred

product characteristics for TB vaccines were recently proposed (207). Also, rather than a single biomarker, a cluster of biomarkers (biosignature) may be better at predicting protective capacity. Putative correlates could also be validated in resisters, who experience repeated, intense *M. tuberculosis* exposures (for example, in health care workers in high-incidence settings and in household contacts) but never convert their skin test or become IGRA positive (35). However, it is important to address whether resisters, who remain TST and IGRA negative and possess non-IFN- γ T-cell responses to *M. tuberculosis*-specific proteins (21), truly resist *M. tuberculosis* infection or whether they still harbor *M. tuberculosis* infection. As discussed above, there is no microbiological standard to measure the acquisition, persistence, and clearance of asymptomatic *M. tuberculosis* infection, and this has implications for the validation of correlates of protection or the design of vaccine clinical trials and other control interventions. The risk of progression to TB in these IGRA-negative resisters with unique adaptive immune responses is likely low, considering the high negative predictive value of the IGRA. Further comprehensive immunological studies in resisters from high-exposure cohorts may likely provide insights into immune correlates of exposure and early clearance (21). Even though such responses can be mimicked by vaccination, mechanisms of protection induced by vaccination may differ from those induced after natural infection.

Other obstacles that thwart TB vaccine progress include the lack of reliable functional assays or surrogates of immunological control, interpretability of animal models, long and expensive licensure trials, and the lack of market incentives to invest in an ailment that primarily burdens low- and middle-income countries. Additional understanding of the impacts of age, sex, geography, coinfections, and comorbidities on vaccine efficacy is required.

ACCELERATING THE TB VACCINE R&D TRAJECTORY: A PERSPECTIVE

Encouraging results in recent TB vaccine clinical trials (9, 10) represent important progress and provide unprecedented opportunities and new hope for eliminating TB. In the next 1 to 5 years, efficacy data are expected from at least six different trials, including the *M. vaccae* (POD), DAR-901 (POI), VPM1002 (POR and POD), ID93:GLA-SE (POR), and H56:IC31 (POR) trials. Insights gained from these trials and future *post hoc* studies using biobanked samples are expected to further advance our understanding of the prognostic ability of current preclinical models, correlates of risk of TB, and correlates of vaccine-induced protection, in addition to an increased understanding of clinical trial design and conduct for different indications. Translation of correlates of protection identified from clinical trials to preclinical animal studies of vaccination (for example, in NHPs) followed by *M. tuberculosis* challenge would likely provide insights into the mechanisms of vaccine-induced protection (208). Despite these breakthroughs, gaining a deeper understanding of human immunity using systems immunology and counting on the experience of initiatives such as the Human Vaccines Project (<http://www.humanvaccinesproject.org/>) will add value to the TB vaccine program. Diversification of the global clinical pipeline of TB vaccine candidates by advancing distinct and novel preclinical vaccine platforms and concepts in human clinical trials, simultaneously focusing on basic research and preclinical discovery programs, and developing better tools, including improved animal models and human “challenge” models that mimic natural infection (209, 210), represent valuable objectives. Furthermore, it is important that TB vaccine research incorporates novel ideas from other vaccine programs and maximizes scientific and clinical capabilities to accelerate the TB vaccine R&D trajectory.

Ideas from Other Vaccine Development Programs

HIV. Unprecedented scientific efforts that followed the partial efficacy reported in the Rv144 HIV vaccine trial provided a wealth of new information on the potential correlates of protection against HIV-1 acquisition, which include fragment crystallizable (Fc)-mediated antibody effector functions and CD4⁺ T-cell responses to HIV envelope (211). Since a minority of HIV-infected people produce antibodies that neutralize a broad variety of HIV strains, concerted efforts are also ongoing to develop immunogens

that will elicit broadly neutralizing antibodies that prevent HIV infection following exposure (212, 213). Efforts are also directed at engaging cell-mediated immunity to induce persistent mucosal memory T cells (212, 214). Likewise, in people with LTBI, a protective role for Fc-mediated *M. tuberculosis*-specific antibody effector functions, tuned via differential glycosylation, was recently described (34). *M. tuberculosis* surface-directed potentially neutralizing antibodies, which act in concert with CD4⁺ T cells and afford partial protection in mouse and *in vitro* models, have been found in some health care workers who are exposed to high doses of *M. tuberculosis* (33). The resisters identified among household contacts of TB patients have been found to possess noncanonical CD4⁺ T-cell responses, IgM and class-switched IgG antibody responses with enhanced avidity, distinct Fc profiles, and higher-level Fc γ R3a binding (21), which may enhance *M. tuberculosis* control (34, 215). Identifying targets of such protective antibodies during natural infection, studying the structural mode of target recognition and CD4⁺ T-cell–B-cell/antibody interactions, and characterizing protective mucosal B- and T-cell responses may provide a blueprint for the rational development of preventive and therapeutic TB vaccines.

Malaria. RTS,S, the first vaccine to demonstrate partial efficacy against malaria, also induces protective antibodies against the protein made by the infectious stage of the malarial parasite, single-celled sporozoites (216). A chemoattenuated sporozoite vaccine administered by the intravenous route was recently reported to afford sterile protection against malaria, and the frequency of specific polyfunctional CD4⁺ memory T cells rather than antibodies was associated with protection (217). Intravenous or pulmonary administration of improved live-attenuated mycobacterial vaccines, recently shown to afford high-level protection for BCG (199; data from the laboratory of JoAnne Flynn, Robert Seder, and colleagues [234]), may provide information about the route of vaccination in improved protection against TB, potentially by inducing trained immunity, mucosal antibodies, and tissue-resident memory (T_{RM}) cells and/or by eliminating reservoirs and hiding niches.

Cancer. Interventions that restore appropriate immune checkpoint signaling, reprogram host immunometabolic circuits, and act on epigenetic alterations have often been used as an adjunct to cancer vaccines and chemotherapy to induce efficient antitumor responses (218). In *M. tuberculosis*-infected or diseased individuals, traditional vaccination approaches may fail to correct immune imbalance. Because immune responses to malignancies and TB share many similar mechanisms, host-directed interventions along with therapeutic vaccination should be investigated. Examples of these interventions may include modulation of metabolism pathways to generate long-lived T central memory (T_{CM}) cells responses, reduction of T-cell receptor (TCR) avidity to lessen T-cell exhaustion, the use of chimeric TCR or humanized-antibody therapies, and generation of granuloma-infiltrating T cells (219–223). Distinct host-directed therapies during LTBI and TB disease to potentiate vaccine/chemotherapy responses and determining the effective timing of these interventions in the *M. tuberculosis* infection spectrum will be required.

OUTLOOK AND CONCLUSIONS

After decades of research, the clinical development of a TB vaccine is now at a pivotal juncture, with exciting efficacy signals to improve on. Observations from recent TB vaccine clinical trials with efficacy (9, 10) have raised expectations for identifying correlates of protection against TB. The use of animal and human challenge models, harmonization of preclinical and clinical vaccine studies, and evaluation of vaccine candidates in innovative experimental-medicine trials will advance TB vaccine development. This will allow iterative improvements in partially effective candidates until meaningful protection is achieved in diverse populations. Vaccine candidates that demonstrate such efficacy signals should also be investigated for other indications, such as host-directed therapy–chemotherapy–vaccine integrated approaches to cure infection or disease. While advancing TB vaccine candidates, it will be important to manage expectations and maintain the momentum to yield licensed products. By

complementing ongoing global R&D efforts with increased investments, collaboration between all stakeholders and partners, and bringing political leadership under one umbrella, as was achieved to some degree at the recently concluded United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting, more breakthroughs in the development of clinically effective vaccines to conquer TB globally can be achieved.

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Suraj B. Sable, D.V.M., Ph.D., received his D.V.M. from Nagpur Veterinary College, M.V.Sc. from the Indian Veterinary Research Institute, and Ph.D. from the Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, India. He was an American Society for Microbiology (ASM) Postdoctoral Fellow at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Atlanta, GA. He served as an Immunology Activity Leader and Principal Scientist for ASM and ORISE fellowships at the Division of Tuberculosis Elimination, CDC. He is currently a Senior Scientist, Immunology, in the Laboratory Branch, Division of Tuberculosis Elimination, CDC, Atlanta, GA. Dr. Sable's research interests include immunology and cell biology of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* infections, animal models of TB, and development of new vaccines and host-directed therapies against TB. He has worked in the field of TB immunology for 20 years and investigated several vaccine candidates in preclinical models.



James E. Posey, Ph.D., received his doctorate at the University of Georgia. He is currently the lead of the Applied Research Team (ART) within the Division of TB Elimination at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA. He directs the research portfolio of ART that focuses on genotyping of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, mechanisms of drug resistance, and immunology and cell biology of tuberculosis. His team is currently applying whole-genome sequencing to understand the transmission dynamics of TB and search for new mechanisms of drug resistance and established the National Tuberculosis Molecular Surveillance Center for performing universal whole-genome sequencing of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. The team has discovered several new mechanisms of drug resistance to kanamycin, streptomycin, capreomycin, and fluoroquinolones. His team is also using the latest technologies to investigate latent TB and host-directed therapies for treating TB.



Thomas J. Scriba, Ph.D., is Professor at the University of Cape Town, South Africa, and Deputy Director, Immunology, of the South African Tuberculosis Vaccine Initiative (SATVI), a clinical research organization situated in a setting where TB is endemic. He directs the SATVI Clinical Immunology Laboratory, a team of scientists, postdoctoral fellows, postgraduate students, and technicians. Dr. Scriba's research focuses on TB vaccine development; immunopathogenesis of human TB; immunological biomarkers of *M. tuberculosis* infection, disease progression, and treatment response; as well as identification of correlates of protection against TB. He has been coinvestigator on two dozen phase 1/2/2b clinical trials of novel TB vaccines, led multiple studies that have identified immune correlates of the risk of TB, and developed blood biomarkers with prognostic and diagnostic utility for TB.

