

# Vaccine to Treat ‘Neglected Disease’ Shows Promising Results

*New research shows that the only vaccine being tested to prevent and treat schistosomiasis can do both.*

LUBBOCK, TX, UNITED STATES, July 2, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- For a vaccine to be effective, it must do two things. First, it must trigger an immune response. Second, the vaccine must train the body to remember the response so it can fight that same disease in the future. Now, new research shows that the only vaccine being tested to prevent and treat schistosomiasis can do both, and the researcher who made it possible is Afzal Siddiqui, Ph.D., from the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC).



Afzal Siddiqui, Ph.D., Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center

Schistosomiasis is caused by a worm that contaminates fresh water. The worm’s larvae penetrate the skin and develop into adults. Those adult worms produce eggs that cause the disease. Schistosomiasis can be found in nearly 80 countries and is common in sub-Saharan Africa. The World Health Organization estimates 250 million people are carrying the disease. An additional 800 million people are at risk of getting the infection, making schistosomiasis second only to malaria among the world’s deadliest tropical parasitic diseases.

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*Afzal Siddiqui, Ph.D., Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center*

Siddiqui is the director of the TTUHSC [Center for Tropical Medicine and Infectious Diseases](#) and chair of the Department of Immunology and Molecular Microbiology at the TTUHSC School of Medicine. He has devoted decades to creating SchistoShield,<sup>®</sup> a vaccine to treat schistosomiasis. Siddiqui said samples taken from people who’ve received trial doses of the vaccine in both the United States and Africa now demonstrate the vaccine’s effectiveness. The new research, now published in [NPJ Vaccines](#) “Schistosomiasis vaccine SchistoShield<sup>®</sup> induces functional immune

memory responses in US and African populations” concludes “the SchistoShield® vaccine induced robust cell-mediated effector and memory responses, hallmarks of a potentially efficacious vaccine against schistosome/helminth parasites.”

“The people we have vaccinated, in both the U.S. and in Africa, have the memory response, both B-cell and T-cell-based,” Siddiqui said. “The vaccine is doing what it is supposed to. But always remember that these trials are very small 50 to 100 people. Now it has to go to thousands of people. So that’s where we are moving into.”

Schistosomiasis is considered a “neglected disease” because it predominantly affects impoverished communities in tropical and subtropical regions. There’s only one drug available to treat people, but it does not prevent re-infection. Through his efforts, and the support of TTUHSC, federal grants and national and international charitable and non-profit groups, Siddiqui has been able to develop SchistoShield® as a humanitarian effort, rather than making it for profit.

“Our purpose from the beginning has been to expand access to care,” TTUHSC President Lori Rice-Spearman, Ph.D., said. “Dr. Siddiqui’s work reflects that commitment through research that could help address a disease affecting millions of people around the world.”

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