TUBERCULOSIS VACCINE TOO RISKY FOR HIV-INFECTED INFANTS

GENEVA – HIV-infected infants risk contracting a deadly form of tuberculosis from the bacille Calmette-Guerin (BCG) vaccine, instead of receiving protection against the disease, according to research published today in the international public health journal, the Bulletin of the World Health Organization.

While the BCG vaccine is given to approximately 75% of newborn babies worldwide, a South African study has found that its harm may outweigh the benefits for HIV-infected infants. The study recommends delaying vaccination until the infant’s HIV status is known.

“There is an urgent need to assess the risk versus benefits of this vaccine in settings where both HIV infection and tuberculosis burdens are high,” says co-author Professor Simon Schaaf, from the Desmond Tutu TB Centre at Stellenbosch University in South Africa.

Read the research paper here: http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/87/7/08-055657.pdf

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