Inactivated Polio Vaccination Using a Microneedle Patch

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ABSTRACT SUMMARY
Microneedle patches were designed to simplify delivery of inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) and increase vaccine immunogenicity in support of global polio eradication. These patches were shown, for the first time, to be safe and effective in the rhesus macaque. We also showed that slow release of IPV in the skin increased vaccine immunogenicity compared to bolus dosing. In this way, IPV vaccination using a microneedle patch may facilitate mass vaccination and increase vaccine immunogenicity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Microneedle patches were fabricated as 10 x 10 arrays of pyramidal needles, seen in Figure 1. Insertion into pig skin showed that the needles were strong enough to penetrate the skin. ELISA testing confirmed loading of a full IPV dose in the patches and that the dose was delivered into the skin upon needle dissolution. Microneedles were inserted by thumb into the skin without need of an applicator.
While microneedle patches have been studied before for other vaccines, polio vaccination has not been tested before. We therefore vaccinated rhesus macaques with a full human dose of IPV types 1 and 2 with a prime dose and a booster dose 8 weeks later. The neutralizing antibody response after microneedle patch vaccination closely matched that of the intramuscular vaccination group, showing no statistically significant differences (Fig. 2). Following the booster, all the animals exhibited protective antibody titers for type 1 and 2 poliovirus by week 12. No animals in either vaccination group exhibited any systemic or local adverse events or safety concerns.

In humans, a single vaccination only provides protection to about 50% of recipients, and three doses are necessary to achieve 95% seroconversion. To improve vaccine immunogenicity and increase seroconversion rates, we hypothesized that altering the kinetics of antigen presentation in the skin, we could improve vaccine immunogenicity. In this preliminary study, we delivered IPV type 2 by (a) bolus injection on day 1, (b) pulsatile dose (1/2 dose on days 1 and 7), or (c) a constant dose (1/7 dose daily for seven days). Blood was collected every 2 weeks for 8 weeks. After 2 weeks, neutralizing antibody titers were similar for the bolus and pulsatile groups, but were significantly higher for the constant dose group (Fig. 3). The seroconversion rates (i.e., titers > 3) were 20% for the intramuscular bolus group, 40% for the intradermal bolus injection, 40% for the pulsatile group, and 100% for the constant group. We are currently investigating how other release profiles will affect vaccine immunogenicity.

CONCLUSION
We used a microneedle patch to safely and effectively deliver IPV to rhesus macaques. Using controlled vaccine release, we showed significantly increased vaccine immunogenicity after constant vaccine dosing for one week, achieving 100% seroconversion after a single dose in rats. These findings suggest that IPV vaccination using a microneedle patch formulated for controlled release may aid in vaccination in poliovirus outbreaks and provide improved immunity after a single vaccination.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
This work was funded in part by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the World Health Organization, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Global Immunization Division.

Mark Prausnitz is an inventor of patents licensed to companies developing microneedle-based products, paid advisor to companies developing microneedle-based products, and founder/shareholder of companies developing microneedle-based products. This potential conflict of interest has been disclosed and managed by Georgia Tech and Emory University.