WOMEN & SCIENCE
THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY
1230 YORK AVENUE • NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10065-6399

SPRING BREAKFAST FORUM

At Long Last a Cervical Cancer Vaccine is Here: Are Other Vaccines on the Way?

Date: Thursday, March 6, 2008
Time: 7:30 – 8:00 a.m. Registration & Breakfast Buffet
8:00 – 9:00 a.m. Program

Place: Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Hall
York Avenue at 66th Street
The Rockefeller University

A major breakthrough in women's health was achieved in 2006 with the licensing of a vaccine that protects against cervical cancer. The vaccine is designed to prevent common infections (caused by human papilloma virus, or HPV) that may lead to the disease. Cervical cancer is almost always preventable with regular screenings, but it is still responsible for approximately 3,700 deaths in the United States every year. Because screening is rarely available in developing nations, cervical cancer is the second most common women's cancer worldwide, causing an estimated 230,000 deaths annually.

The vaccines that provide immunity against infectious diseases such as polio, measles, and hepatitis are among the most important accomplishments in the history of biomedicine. Developing any new vaccine, however, is a particularly difficult undertaking, requiring innovative thinking, significant funding, and many years of intensive work at the laboratory bench and in the clinic.

Does the introduction of HPV immunization pave the way for new vaccines against other chronic, incurable infections? Rockefeller scientist **Sarah Schlesinger**, M.D., who works at the leading edge of vaccine development, will focus on this question at the *Women & Science* Spring Breakfast on Thursday, March 6. She will also explain vaccine basics and discuss current guidelines for immunization from the perspective of a physician-scientist who is also a mother.

A graduate of Wellesley College, Dr. Schlesinger received an M.D. from Rush Medical College and trained in Anatomic Pathology at New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill-Cornell Medical College, where she was chief resident. Currently, she holds a joint appointment as Research Associate Professor of The Rockefeller University and the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center, and she is the physician coordinating the Diamond Center's clinical research on experimental HIV/AIDS vaccines at The Rockefeller University Hospital.

Dr. Schlesinger is also investigating new vaccine approaches that exploit the properties of dendritic cells, key immune-system cells that were discovered at Rockefeller. Dendritic cells are essential infection fighters that are also showing promise as a component of therapeutic vaccines engineered to target cancer.

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