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Russian Watchdog to Test New Ebola Vaccine on Primates

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Russia's health watchdog Rospotrebnadzor said Tuesday that the agency will begin testing a vaccine for the Ebola virus in the spring, RIA Novosti reported.

"We hope to start testing it on primates by the beginning of the spring," Rospotrebnadzor head Anna Popova was cited by the news agency as saying at a press conference.

Popova was cited as saying that successful testing of the vaccine will enable Russian virologists to conduct further testing on humans at a later date.

The Russian watchdog is one of many organizations in a global race to produce an effective vaccine for the virus, which the World Health Organization says has killed more than 8,500 people and infected a further 13,000, predominantly in Western Africa.

With clinical trials of vaccines being developed by major U.S. pharmaceutical companies producing "encouraging results," according to the WHO, Popova told RIA Novosti that Russia

will continue its development of the vaccine even if another is developed first.

"If someone does it sooner, that's good ... but I believe it's a matter of national security when we have our own protective measures," she said.

Russia has already spent $60 million fighting the virus, Popova said previously, most of it indirectly through the WHO, the United Nations and other international organizations.

Rospotrebnadzor's announcement comes as a woman who arrived Monday at Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport with "Ebola-like" symptoms tested negative for the virus, the TASS news agency reported, citing an airport source.

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