Hope for AIDS cure in Canada

New Canadian research has found that a particular gene in the human system can check the spread of HIV, raising hopes for a cure for AIDS.

Stephen Barr of the University of Alberta in Edmonton who is behind the find told IANS that his research, combined with a possible vaccine, could stop the spread of the disease in the foreseeable future.

'Yes, there is definitely hope for AIDS patients. But we are at the initial stages. It could take years, possibly 10, to find out if this works,' he said.

Barr said during his research on the TRIM22 gene that fights viruses in the body he found that this particular gene was not active in the HIV patients.

'There are hundreds of genes which get triggered as part of our immune system when viruses attack. But in the case of HIV patients, this gene didn't get turned on. I don't why,' he said.

'But when during lab tests this gene was turned on in cells infected with the HIV virus, we found out that it checked the growth of the virus,' he said.

In fact, the gene helped get the deadly HIV virus locked inside the cells, thus checking its spread, he added.

However, he warned that the gene was triggered only in lab conditions. It was yet to be tested in HIV patients whether it could be turned on.

'If it happens, we can possibly say this gene is a cure for AIDS,' he said.

He said money was needed for speeding up the research.

'As international organisations have funded search for a vaccine, we also need funds for our work as we take a closer look at how this gene works in HIV patients,' said Barr, who started his research at the University of Pennsylvania three years ago before moving to the University of Alberta in Edmonton.

Gurmukh Singh (© IANS / India eNews)