

Timo Vesikari, Director Vaccine Research Center, University of Tampere, Finland



Dr. Timo Vesikari is Professor (emer.) and Director of Vaccine Research Center at the University of Tampere Medical School. Dr. Vesikari obtained his medical degree in 1969 from the University of Helsinki and did postgraduate studies in 1972–1975 in New York at the Bellevue Hospital and the Roosevelt Hospital. His appointments at the University of Tampere include Professor of Pediatrics in 1981–1987 and Professor of Virology in 1991–2012. In 1995–2001 he was Director of Medical School at the University of Tampere. Dr. Vesikari was in 1990 the Bill Marshall lecturer of the European Society for Paediatric Infectious Diseases. Dr. Vesikari worked with the Diarrhoeal Disease Control Programme of WHO in 1987–1990 and subsequently served on WHO Steering Committees on Diarrhoeal Disease Vaccines and on Epidemiology and Field Research.

Dr. Vesikari's research interest has focused on vaccine studies since the first rubella vaccine trial in Finland in 1968. He conducted the first clinical trials of live oral rotavirus vaccines in humans in 1982–1983, followed by several other rotavirus candidate vaccines. He continued to work with the current rotavirus vaccines of GSK and Merck, being the principal investigator of the first pediatric trials of Rotarix™ vaccine and the lead investigator of the Merck's RotaTeq™ vaccine trial REST. The published results in 2006 of these two trials were selected Lancet's Paper of the Year in 2007. Dr. Vesikari has conducted clinical trials on a number of other vaccines for children, including live attenuated and adjuvanted inactivated influenza vaccines, varicella and MMRV vaccines, zoster vaccines, pneumococcal conjugate vaccines and meningococcal vaccines. Dr. Vesikari's major research project at the Vaccine Research Center has been development of a combined non-live rotavirus and norovirus vaccine for the prevention of viral gastroenteritis in children.