**Vaccine stirs hopes**

By YANN TESSIER

FLORENCE (Italy), Thursday

Scientists said today they had developed

an Aids vaccine now being tested on humans which may give long-term protection against the deadly disease.

Dr Josef Manhalter, a researcher for the Swiss-based Immuno International AG group of companies said chimpanzees

given the vaccine resisted infection

for over 30 months from the HIV virus which causes Aids -

Acquired Immune Deficiency

Syndrome.

"This is the longest lasting immunity

known to date, said Dr

Manhalter, presenting the results

of his research at the seventh International

Aids Conference.

, He told Reuters in an interview

that clinical trials on 60 human

volunteers were: already under

way and results were expected in

a few months.,

But Dr Manhalter said the vaccine

still faced a rigorous testing

programme and even if it fulfilled

its early promise, a commercially

available vaccine was still several

years away.

The virus destroys the body's

defences against disease by infecting

and killing selected white

blood cells called T4 lymphocytes.

(Reuters)