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**New Aids discovery**

PARIS

French researchers said that they

had discovered the gateway

through which the Aids virus

penetrates and infects blood cells,

a discovery that could lead to the

development of a vaccine to lock

the virus out.

The Pasteur Institute team

said it had discovered a “co-receptor” molecule, named,

used by all strains of the Aids

virus to gain entry.

Aids researchers have known

for several years that the HIV virus latches onto a receptor molecule called CD4 on the surface of

some blood cells.

“But we did not know how the

virus got inside the cell to contaminate it,” Dr Ara

Hovanessian, who headed the

Pasteur Institute’s research team.

The group’s findings were to be

presented yesterday at an Aids

conference outside Paris.

Researcher Robert Gallo of the

National Institute of Health in

Bethesda, Maryland in the USA,

said the findings appeared to be a

‘very exciting, very stimulating

step” in Aids research. (AP)