## Vaccine against anthrax

Researchers in the United States report to have found a way to fight the menace of anthrax. They have shown that mice injected with fragments of DNA from anthrax bacteria can be immunized against the disease. This approach represents a new and perhaps safer technique to produce vaccines against highly contagious diseases. The research team was headed by Mr. Darrell Galloway, Associate Professor of Microbiology at Ohio State University and colleagues at the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research and the Biological Defence Research Directorate programme at the Naval Medical Research Centre.

In traditional vaccine approaches, researchers use live, weakened or dead pathogens or protein produced by the organisms to produce an immune response. The latest study improves on earlier work that suggested that DNA-based vaccines might be effective. By using the combination of two gene products produced by the bacteria responsible for causing anthrax, *Bacillus anthracis*, the team was able to successfully immunize mice against the disease. (Down to Earth, 15 November 2001)