

Sarah Gilbert King Faisal Award Acceptance Speech

Your Royal Highnesses, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a very great honour to have been awarded this year's King Faisal Prize for Medicine, alongside Professor Dan Barouch of Harvard University.

I am humbled to join the other 2023 laureates today, and to follow-in the footsteps of the men and women whose work has been recognised by the Foundation over more than four decades.

This award is in recognition of my work to co-create a vaccine for COVID-19. A low-cost, accessible, efficacious vaccine that has now been used in more than 180 countries and is estimated to have saved more than six million lives by the start of 2022.

But this vaccine would not have been produced without an enormous effort by an exceptional team.

Firstly, by the many people at the University of Oxford, who worked unceasingly to bring their scientific expertise and ingenuity to the most pressing global health challenge in a century.

Secondly, by our collaborators in Brazil and South Africa with whom we formed a research partnership. A global challenge required a global solution.

And thirdly, by AstraZeneca and their network of vaccine manufacturers, who committed to providing the vaccine on a non-profit basis to all countries during the pandemic, and to low income countries for as long as it is needed.

Together we achieved our goal of making a vaccine for the world.

And of course, much of our success in the last three years must be attributed to the years of research in vaccine technologies, prior to the pandemic, that laid the groundwork for us to achieve the first emergency use licensure of our Covid vaccine in 2020.

This research included our work on Middle East Respiratory Syndrome, or MERS, which involved collaboration with researchers here in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

So where next for this research?

My team, as part of the new Pandemic Sciences Institute in Oxford, are applying our research to the pandemic threats of the future.

The viruses we know about, and those that we don't.

By working together - across sectors, disciplines and geographies - we are developing the vaccines and treatments that will protect humankind from the threat of infectious diseases.

As the last three years have shown us, this is vitally important work and it is my privilege to continue doing it.