Update on prevention and control of hepatitis B in the WHO European Region

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Viral Hepatitis B endemicity: Estimated prevalence of HBsAg carriers (*)

Hepatitis B Immunization Policy, 2007

- Universal newborns
- Universal infants
- Universal children/adolescents
- Immunization of newborns at risk
Hep B3 immunization coverage, 2007
Immunization coverage rates, WHO European Region, 1995-2006
HepB3 coverage
WHO European Region, 2003-2006

Coverage (%)

Year
2003 2004 2005 2006

Region
Countries with universal immunization
Hep B birth dose coverage
European Region/WHO 2004-6*

20 countries with universal immunization of infants reported to WHO/EURO
Countries of the WHO European Region eligible for GAVI support

- Armenia
- Azerbaijan
- Georgia
- Kyrgyzstan
- Moldova
- Tajikistan
- Ukraine
- Uzbekistan

Countries no longer GAVI eligible:
- Albania
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Turkmenistan

Not eligible for Phase 2:
- Albania
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Turkmenistan
Hib Vaccine Implementation Status, 2007

Hib Vaccine Implementation Status Nov 2007
- Universal Immunization (39 Countries)
- Part of the country (1 Country)
- Not yet included (10 countries)
- Developed proposal for GAVI support (3 Countries)
Impact of Hepatitis B vaccination on the incidence of acute Hepatitis B infection, Moldova

Source: National Center of Preventive Medicine, Moldova
Hepatitis B incidence in children under 5, Kyrgyzstan, 2000-2005

Source: CDC/CAR
Prevalence of chronic hepatitis B infection in vaccinated and unvaccinated children, Almaty, 2001

Source: M. Favorov CDC/CAR

N=351
Major achievements

- Hep B vaccine was introduced in routine immunization programmes in most countries
- The poorest countries successfully introduced HepB vaccine with GAVI support
- All high endemic countries provide birth dose
- HepB vaccine was combined with existing successful programmes
- Impact of universal childhood immunization on Hepatitis B diseases burden was demonstrated
- Hepatitis B vaccine introduction is a model for introduction of other underutilized and new vaccines
Challenges: Immunization coverage

- Most countries in the European region have achieved >90% immunisation coverage, BUT…
  - Timely provision of immunisation is a problem in several countries
  - Discrepancies between reported and survey data exist
  - National data often hides under-performing districts; and collection of data at sub-national level can be poor
WHO Regional Office for Europe

Vaccine preventable diseases and Immunization programme

Sub-national immunization coverage reporting: DTP3 in Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan

- Source: Reach Every District (RED) Reporting form
- The designations employed and the presentation of this material do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the World Health Organization concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.
Timeliness of immunization: coverage with hepatitis B and DTP vaccines by dose and age, Moldova, DHS, 2005

Source: National Centre of Preventive Medicine, Moldova
Challenges: Inadequate provision of health care

Inadequate provision of health care service to vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups

- Socially isolated (race, language, religion, culture)
- Economically disadvantaged
- Physically isolated (remote populations, mobile groups)
- Deprived of reliable information
Public confidence is being threatened

- Strong influence from groups opposed to immunisation
- Dissemination of misleading / biased information
- Influence of negative stories in the media
- Available reliable information not properly used
Negative examples from countries

- **Germany**: measles outbreak after effective anti-vaccination propaganda
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina**: NGO “SOS Telephone” against hepatitis B immunisation, the local media involved, impact on immunization uptake
- **Georgia**: parents had to give their written agreement to have their newborn babies immunised against hepatitis B; some got suspicious. Negative impact of an AE following HepB immunisation: no timely information from health authorities, negative media coverage and rumours resulted in decrease in immunization coverage
- **Ukraine**: anti-vaccination campaign before SIA, the local media involved and also quoted in the BBC
Hepatitis B Vaccination

- Eight countries do not implement universal Hep B immunization
- 27 countries introduce birth dose
- Reporting of birth dose coverage needs to be improved and validated
Regional Strategic Plan, 2008-2013

**Strategic Areas:**

1. Immunization Systems Strengthening
2. Targeted Disease Initiatives
3. Surveillance, Laboratory and Monitoring

**Strategies to Achieve Regional Goals and Objectives:**

1. Effective partnerships with Member States and governmental and non-governmental agencies and organizations
2. Strong and effective resource mobilization and management practices
3. Using regular and effective communication and advocacy with Member States, partner organizations and the public
4. Ongoing oversight by the European Technical Advisory Group of Experts
EURO Regional Immunization Priorities for 2008

• Strengthening national immunization programmes in the context of overall health systems development
• Sustaining polio eradication
• Measles/Rubella elimination by 2010
• Support for introduction of new and under-utilized vaccines
• Strengthening national VPD surveillance systems – emphasis on building capacity for regional data collection, reporting and analysis and laboratory networks.
Immunization Systems Strengthening

• Planning ongoing for strengthening monitoring and feedback systems for national programmes to improve timeliness of immunization

• Promote service delivery to difficult-to-reach population groups

• Support and conduct of training of health staff – IIP, MLM, Integrated Surveillance and other

• Increasing immunization programme visibility and public awareness via European Immunization Week

• Supporting health system assessments, development of HSS proposals, cMYP and other tools to address system-wide barriers
EURO Regional Immunization Programme