

Groups discussion- group 3

Impact of non-responders on public health, is it a threat to eliminate hepatitis B?

Are new recommendations for the management of non-responders needed?

Does the “hurdle” has an impact on public health and/or the elimination goals

We have to consider two aspects of non-response:

a) The non-response in vaccinated newborns which can not be recognized on an individual basis

b) The non-response in members of high-risk groups (e.g. health care workers, people with high risk behaviour), who could be identified as non-responders and should be treated adequately

Does the “hurdle” has an impact on public health and/or the elimination goals

ad a) a certain percentage of newborns will not respond due to several reasons (genetic factors, immunological reasons, high viral load of the mother). The group agreed, that it has no impact on public health nor is it a threat to the elimination of hepatitis B, as long as vaccination is performed with good quality-controlled vaccines under correct conditions.

ad b) vaccinated individuals of high risk groups identified as non-responders should be treated according to already existing guidelines (WHO 2017). This was seen by the group as a medical problem and not as a public health issue.

Is there a need to adopt or create guidelines/recommendations

The group agreed that it is necessary

- to define non-responsiveness
- to make recommendations what to do in case of non-response

Both subjects are addressed in the WHO position paper Hepatitis B vaccines (Weekly epidemiological record, No 27, 2017, 92, 369–392)

p 376: non-responders to conventional yeast-derived vaccines whose anti-HBs antibody concentration does not reach 10 mIU/mL after 3 doses of HBV vaccine

p 380: Almost all individuals (infants, children, adolescents and adults) who do not respond to a primary 3-dose series with anti- HBs antibody concentrations of ≥ 10 mIU/mL do respond to an additional 3-dose vaccination series.

What can be the role of VHPB or other stakeholders in this proces

VHPB should discuss, whether the WHO-recommendations are sufficient, and if yes should refer to them.