

# Experience of introduction of pneumococcal vaccine in Barbados

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EPI Managers Meeting  
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# Background to Presentation

- In late 2007, Barbados took the decision to introduce conjugate pneumococcal vaccine into the routine childhood vaccination schedule
- The implementation of this decision commenced in January 2009



# Focus of presentation

- This presentation will focus on:
  - the steps taken to commence the process
  - the progress and the steps needed to complete the process
  - the experiences encountered
  - the challenges expected and experienced



# Steps accomplished

- A Situation Analysis of the cases of pneumococcal disease in children <5 years old, who were admitted to the tertiary hospital over a 5 year period, was done
- A cost effectiveness study on introduction of the vaccine was undertaken



# Steps accomplished

- Discussions were held with the company Wyeth to obtain a price for the conjugate vaccine. This was because at that time the vaccine had not been pre qualified by the WHO.
- Sensitization workshops sponsored by Wyeth held for stakeholders
- Some promotional material given



# Steps accomplished

- Discussions were also held with PAHO Officials to obtain an indication as to when the vaccine would be included in the Revolving Fund and to request that they negotiate the best possible price with the company.



# Steps accomplished

- The National Advisory Committee (NAC), on immunizations met, analyzed the data and decided to advise introduction of the vaccine
- The NAC decided on the age groups to be immunized and not to administer a catch up dose



# Steps accomplished

- An assessment of the requirements for vaccines, needles and syringes was done
- Cold storage capacity was assessed at the national central vaccine storage site



# Steps accomplished

- A Proposal was written to the Minister of Health for consideration by senior officials at his planning meeting
- It contained justifications, options & costing for the introduction of the vaccine
- The proposal was presented and approved by MOH



# Steps accomplished

- The Proposal was sent to Cabinet for approval & this was received with-out any delays or deferment
- Costs for the first year were placed in the national annual health budget
- The money requested was granted by the Ministry of Finance for 2009



# Steps accomplished

- Orders for vaccine, needles and syringes were placed with PAHO thru the revolving fund
- This was a special order at that time



# Steps accomplished

- Child health take home cards were reviewed and revised by a small committee and comments from some stakeholders received
- As a result a new booklet was formulated with additional information for users



# CONTENT OF BOOKLET

- New Child health booklet contains info on birth, growth and development using the WHO new growth health charts, nutrition and feeding of young child, dental care and immunization history



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**PERSONAL CHILD  
HEALTH RECORD**



# Steps accomplished

- Arrangements made with the Government Printery to have these new booklets printed in time for Jan 2009
- Preliminary sensitization and training of staff to the new vaccine schedule and the new booklet was done



# Steps accomplished

- Communication strategy for the public developed with the Government Information Service (GIS)
- Press releases to the public on planned introduction of vaccine prepared and given to the GIS
- Once the vaccine was received these were released



# Steps accomplished

- Increased Public education on new schedule and need for this vaccine in press and media
- New leaflets and pamphlets developed for the public
- New posters developed for sensitization of the public



37/1



PNEUMO...  
WHAT?

Pneumococcus.

What kind of  
germ is that?

It's a germ that can  
cause serious diseases  
in babies like us. It can  
even cause meningitis!

I'm going to tell  
my mommy to ask  
my doctor.

There are ways to prevent pneumococcal diseases. Pneumococcus causes serious diseases including meningitis and pneumonia. There is now a vaccine available to prevent it in the first few months of life. Your doctor can give you information about it.

Wyeth®





# Steps accomplished

- Guidelines and procedures for administering vaccine developed and disseminated to stakeholders
- Sensitization of private practitioners on the vaccine, its storage and administration. (This was thru seminars/meetings and a leaflet)



# Steps accomplished

- Training of primary care staff commenced using a variety of methods
- These included memos, meetings/seminars, fun activities e.g. quizzes and a treasure hunt



# Steps accomplished

- Vaccine administration commenced on 2<sup>nd</sup> Jan 2009 to all children presenting at 2 months for first immunization
- At risk children e.g. those with Sickle Cell Anaemia offered vaccine
- No catch up programme done



# Activities currently being done

- Improved surveillance for diseases caused by pneumococcal bacteria
- Improved surveillance for ESAVI's
- Re-training on the collection of accurate statistics on coverage and utilization
- Evaluation 6 months after introduction



# Experiences

- Mostly positive
- Necessity to change several things at the same time e.g. child health card & schedule
- Drug company has been supportive
- Most costly vaccine ever introduce but supportive environment



# Challenges

- Introduction right after Christmas when parents interests in health items not at its highest
- GIS off the air for all of December
- Staff a bit reluctant to change schedule to 2, 4, 6 months
- Resistance from the hospital to the change in the new card



# Challenges

- High cost of the vaccine for the private sector
- Some of the GP's did not attend the training sessions and were not aware
- Government Printery could not deliver on time and unable to sustain the production due to financial constraints



# Commendations

- To the Government of Barbados for supporting the initiative
- To the senior managers in the Ministry of Health for their support
- To the National Advisory Committee
- To the public health team for their efforts in successful implementation



# RECOMMENDATIONS

- That WHO Regional Offices will be able to continue negotiations with the company to lower the price of vaccine
- Other countries in the region will be able to introduce this vaccine to all new born babies
- Or at least to those children “at risk”



# RECOMMENDATIONS

- That each country recognize a national champion who would lead this initiative and take this process forward
- Ensure that NAC is appointed and functioning in all countries



Thanks

