Driving policy to support a life course approach to immunization

27 February 2024

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Driving the agenda of the world’s ageing populations
Vaccines4Life is a knowledge mobilization platform that serves as a point of connection on the most urgent matters related to adult vaccination.
V4L Pillars of Action

**Prevention**

1. Prioritise immunisation throughout life as a key pillar of expanded prevention strategies and a central component of universal health coverage.

**Access**

2. Remove barriers to access for appropriate immunisation throughout life to ensure all people are protected and no one is left behind.

**Equity**

3. Reduce inequities in timely, appropriate, and affordable access to immunisation throughout life.
A life course approach to immunization

**Vaccines** are key to fostering healthy ageing across the life course and maintaining intrinsic capacity and function in later life.

**Unprecedented at-risk populations:**

- Rapid population ageing
- Increasing rates of NCDs
- Immunosenescence associated with ageing
Status of adult vaccination globally

Generally poor uptake of adult vaccination, however surveillance and data on coverage and uptake is limited

40% of countries worldwide have no infrastructure to provide adult immunization

60% of the world’s population lives in countries without routine adult immunization programmes

Ongoing and Emerging Challenges

- Overburdened health systems
- Gaps in routine immunization
- Rising levels of vaccine hesitancy
- Lack of data and evidence-based decision-making
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• Aligning Intergovernmental agendas

WHO Integrated Care for Older People (ICOPE)

UN Decade of Healthy Ageing (The Decade)

UN Sustainable Development Goals

WHO Immunization Agenda 2030 (IA2030)

Implementing the Immunization Agenda 2030: A Framework for Action through Coordinated Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation, Ownership & Accountability, and Communication & Advocacy
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• Using the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing Action Areas and Enablers

Integrated Care
Long-term Care
Age-friendly Environments
Combating Ageism
Voice and engagement
Leadership and capacity building
Connecting stakeholders
Strengthening research, data, and innovation
Driving policy to support a life-course approach to vaccination

• Strategic Vision – Knowledge creation, advocacy and communication
Case study – Integration of a life course approach within NITAGs

A high-level review of 34 NITAGs was conducted to better understand the process, rigour, transparency, accountability, and composition of experts in line with the life-course approach to immunization.
National Immunization Technical Advisory Groups (NITAGs)

Multidisciplinary country-level expert committees tasked with providing independent, evidence-based advice to policymakers and program managers on immunization and vaccine policy issues.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has deemed that NITAGS “are integral to country ownership of immunization programs and have a key role to play as the number and diversity of vaccine products increase.”
Problem Identification

1. **Lack of Transparency:**
   Lack of information and/or refereed literature on their governance, management, and impact.

2. **Composition of NITAG Members:**
   Transparency about the degree to which composition of memberships represents a life course approach.

3. **IA2030 Goals:**
   Meeting the strategic priorities of the IA2030 by strengthening policies & establishing public health interventions to target all age groups
Study Findings

32% of NITAGs have their recommendations accessible online through government websites.

Nearly 50% of NITAGs publicly noted that meetings included external experts. Many NITAGs did not include civil society organizations.

Only France, Canada and El Salvador have an expert or expertise in the field of ageing and/or adult immunization.
Recommendations

1. Call upon WHO to recommend that at least 1 of the 5 members of the NITAG has expertise in a life course approach to immunization.

2. Call upon governments to improve the availability of public information on NITAGs.

3. Call upon governments to mandate reporting of all conflicts of interest of potential and current members of NITAGs.

4. Call upon governments to recognize the importance of the independence and autonomy of NITAGs in deliberating on decisions that inform government immunization policy and implementation.
Knowledge Creation to Stakeholder Engagement

- WHO NITAG Partners Retreat, Turkey, January 2024
- Interviews with key informants to assess barriers to achieving a life course approach within NITAGs
- Framework for Action
Conclusions

• Vaccination has been significantly underprioritized for at-risk adults.

• The UN Decade of Healthy Ageing is an important agenda to drive immunization across the life course.

• NITAGs have a responsibility to frame their deliberations through a population-health lens & drive forward immunization in the context of the IA2030 & healthy ageing.
Thank you

If you would like further information, please contact

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