

**5th Life Course  
Immunisation Summit  
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# WORKING GROUP ON LIFECOURSE IMMUNISATION AND HEALTH SYSTEMS RESILIENCE

## Observations, Challenges, Strategies and Actions



**Vaccines  
Together**

## Observations

### Many Health Systems Are Currently Single-Focused in Terms of Capacity and Structure

- COVID-19 caught health systems everywhere in the world off-guard.
- They were not prepared to take care of health issues that were already existing in the World.
- Diabetes care, Hypertension, and Cancer Services have suffered immensely since the COVID-19 Pandemic began.
- WHO is looking into cause mortality during COVID-19 and will report back.
- There was a significant drop in routine vaccine coverage in the first few months (March - June 2020) of the COVID-19 crisis.

## Challenges

### Single Focused Healthcare Systems Are Not Capable of Handling More Than One Health Issue

- Many health systems have been forced to commandeer all of the health systems for a single disease.
- Many health systems are not resilient enough to handle more than one disease at a time.
- Health Systems are working in response mode, and this must change to instil trust and confidence going forward.
- There should be a health system recovery, which should happen along with the response measures being made in countries during COVID-19.

## Strategies

### Strengthening Attention on Information Systems, Services, Workforce, Supply Chains, and Vaccines

- Essential to have strong national leadership and governance, institutional support and buy-in from partners who are not used to this approach.
- Essential to have communication and support between the teams involved in the health system strengthening.
- Factor in open sharing of data and other relevant information for integrated solutions, then committing and funding to sustain during the acute emergency as well as afterwards.
- During outbreaks, there's a heightened awareness among the policy planners, but it is essential to not move on to the next crisis without learning from the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Observations

There Has Been An Increased Willingness of the Public to Get Vaccinated as a Way Out of the Pandemic

- The vast majority of people consider COVID vaccinations as necessary for a return to normality.
- The whole sphere of demand and uptake of vaccinations after the pandemic may be completely different from before, with widespread acceptance and demand for vaccinations across all ages.

## Challenges

Established Norms and Our Understanding of Vaccines Hesitancy Have Shifted in the COVID-19 Era

- Before the pandemic, we had an understanding of the spectrum of vaccine hesitancy among the various regions and by different socioeconomic characteristics.
- After the pandemic, we do not know how the demand for vaccines and the willingness to get vaccinated will be distributed in different populations' strata.

## Strategies

A Once in a Generation Opportunity for LifeCourse Vaccinations

- Utilise the public experience from the pandemic to relaunch the value of public health with particular reference to preventive immunisation.
- Ensure that the organisational aspects around demand and supply of immunisation services during and after the COVID-19 pandemic won't undermine public confidence.
- Measure the demand and vaccines uptake among different groups of the population.

## Observations

The Delivery of Preventive Services Have Been Negatively Impacted During the COVID-19 Pandemic

- Both the mechanisms and the delivery of preventive services has been negatively impacted by the shift in health services provision towards COVID clinical management.
- In the early stages, parents have been delaying or putting off immunisations sessions because of fear and confusion.
- School-based vaccination programmes have been impacted for HPV and other school-based programmes.
- Daily work of private practices has been disrupted during lockdowns. Routine vaccinations have been cancelled.

## Challenges

There Has Been A Shift in Risk Perceptions Towards Infectious Disease, Protection and Prevention

- A considerable effort is needed to bring back trust and the efficiency of routine immunisation services.
- We're now dealing with a different risk perception towards infectious diseases meaning that people are more sensitive towards protection and prevention than before.
- A different risk perception also means a different risk perception toward vaccines overall (not just COVID-19 vaccines).
- Vaccine hesitancy still exists across Europe and is changing as the pandemic evolves.

## Strategies

An Opportunity to Relaunch the Value of Prevention Prioritising A Life Course Immunisation Approach

- Utilise the public's experience from the pandemic to establish the importance of preventing all vaccine-preventable diseases through immunisation.
- Establish a multidisciplinary approach engaging healthcare professionals across all spectrum and all specialties to promote life course vaccinations.
- Utilise efforts to get routine vaccinations back on track to relaunch and reassure the public's perception of vaccines safety, efficiency and necessity.

## Observations

The Current Expectation is That Most People Will Have to Receive an Annual COVID-19 Vaccine or Booster Annually

- It is expected that all ages and all social groups will have to be vaccinated annually against COVID, making it a true Life Course vaccination.
- All ages and groups will eventually, at some stage, be in contact with the immunisation services to get vaccinated against COVID.

## Challenges

Through COVID-19 Vaccines, We Will Establish Annual Contact with People Across all Ages and Social Groups

- Overcoming COVID vaccination hesitancy, widely perceived to allow a return to normality, won't necessarily help overcome hesitancy against other vaccinations.
- With COVID being the primary concern, it is difficult to switch focus to include other vaccine-preventable diseases.

## Strategies

We Must Utilize the Annual Contact to Vaccinate People with all the Appropriate Vaccines for Their Age and Group

- Utilise the annual COVID vaccination to build a OneStop Life Course Immunisation approach.
- Engage HCPs to utilise their contact for COVID vaccination bringing up other vaccinations that are of interest in the particular target or age group.
- Utilise the public's positive attitude towards COVID vaccination to create willingness for other vaccines offered simultaneously.

## Observations

### There Has Been a Significant Increase in Influenza Vaccinations in 2020/21

- There have been organised widespread campaigns targeting to increase influenza vaccine uptake and alleviate pressure on healthcare services needed for COVID-19. In France, rates reached 60% coverage, a rate that has not been seen for the past two decades.
- The COVID vaccine will be highly given in nursing homes (both residents and carers). It is the first time in history that the elderly are in the frontline of the vaccination program.

## Challenges

### The COVID-19 Vaccine is Delivered Through Parallel Systems and Not Through the Primary Health System

- Many EU countries deliver COVID vaccinations through parallel systems and not through their primary organised prevention system responsible for other vaccinations.
- With adults being a priority for COVID and Influenza vaccinations, there is a shift for the first time in history towards vaccinations in adulthood.
- COVID mortality rates among the elderly population establish and reinforce the need to get vaccinated and protected.

## Strategies

### A Life Course Approach to Vaccines is Needed Starting with Care Homes and the Elderly

- Utilise the momentum of adults being a priority to be protected, to achieve a high uptake for all vaccinations, especially amongst the 70+ population.
- Utilise the newly acquired willingness to get vaccinated and protected against COVID to increase influenza vaccinations across adults.
- Establish that adulthood protection against all vaccine-preventable diseases and the need to avoid unnecessary hospitalisations should remain a priority for the years to come.

## Observations

### Vaccinations are Not of Concern for Most Medical Specialties

- Vaccinations are not considered an area of concern for most specialists.
- Immunisation expertise is not transferred across all HCPs, with most specialists abstaining from advocating vaccinations to their patients.
- Wider Healthcare professionals are not trained to understand immunisation. They do not follow the developments in vaccine technology, so that they are equipped to explain and persuade their patients on the safety, efficiency and necessity of vaccinations.

## Challenges

### Specialty Centric Medicine Creates Additional Challenges to Overarching Issues

- With healthcare professionals focusing on their specialty related conditions/areas, a holistic approach to health prevention is often overlooked.
- Cross-speciality education is challenging, with healthcare professionals being reluctant to engage with issues they do not consider within their scope or workload.
- The experiences acquired by child healthcare professionals and pediatric nurses involved in vaccinations of children is lost when moving from Child Course to Life Course Vaccinations. strategies and programmes.

## Strategies

### Transfer the Acquired Knowledge to Other Specialties

- Create a level of knowledge on vaccination across all healthcare professionals irrespectively to their specialty.
- Mobilise healthcare professionals across the spectrum to engage in prevention through immunisation by getting vaccinated and advocating vaccinations to their patients at every opportunity.
- Enhance the multi-disciplinary approach to immunisation by engaging all healthcare workers in facilitating knowledge transfer and experience sharing by learning from one age group transferring these lessons to others.

## Observations

### Mass Vaccination Against COVID-19 Could Create Problems to Other Vaccinations

- The simultaneous vaccination at the scale that is happening now is unprecedented in history. It creates a more significant risk of allegations from what usually is happening but could be attributed to the vaccine administration.
- During the short period where immunity has to establish post-vaccine, there will be cases of infections that could inflame and create anti-vaxx rhetoric.
- Expectations are high, and the public's perception that the vaccine will stop the pandemic very fast could create disappointment and jeopardise trust in vaccines in general.

## Challenges

### Increased Interest and Expectations Could Create Problems

- Even if the new vaccines have been tested thoroughly for safety, any alleged adverse events will attract interest and could jeopardise confidence in vaccine safety in general.
- The public may find it challenging to understand and scale safety and efficiency the way that scientists do.
- Managing expectations when you are in the middle of a social and economic crisis is challenging, especially when you are trying to create the enthusiasm to increase uptake and build community immunity fast.

## Strategies

### Accessing Any Reported Adverse Reactions and Dispelling Misconceptions Is Crucial

- Utilise the increased public interest to establish a level of objective understanding of vaccines safety and efficiency.
- Mobilise task forces working on pharmacovigilance to assess any issues reported after the vaccination and prepare them to dispel any misconceptions that could create hesitancy immediately.
- Use the great demand opportunity because of the disease threat to build a sustainable and long-lasting demand for vaccinations after the pandemic ends.

## Observations

### We are Falling Behind with the Vaccination of Pregnant Women

- We don't currently adopt or embrace strategies focused on the vaccinations of pregnant women.
- Maternal vaccinations are often not offered by HCPs or not taken up even though they are available.
- COVID vaccine complicates things in the short term since many immunisation trials (certainly at this stage) are not studied in pregnant women.

## Challenges

### New Challenges in the Vaccination of Pregnant Women Are Emerging

- The five C's of vaccines are needed; convenience, confidence, competency, cultural acceptance and now COVID.
- With the number of women working in health care, there will be cases offered the vaccine while they are pregnant.
- With COVID being a priority, the focus is shifting away from pregnant women and vaccinations in the short terms.

## Strategies

### A Two Lives Protected with One-Shot Approach Needs to Be Taken and Promoted

- Make maternal vaccination a top priority in each country.
- Establish a cross-speciality collaboration between gynaecologists and pediatricians to ensure that the mother and the child are protected with one-shot.
- Utilise maternal vaccinations to build a consensus towards a Lifecourse immunisation policy.

## LIFE COURSE SUGGESTED ACTIONS AND CAMPAIGNS 2021/22

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- **Routine Vaccination Campaign** - With the focus of governments on COVID, the healthcare community needs to step in and communicate with patients on the necessity not to miss their scheduled vaccinations.
- **HCPs Advocating Vaccines in Every Consultation Campaign** - With the focus being on protecting elderly people from COVID, the healthcare professionals of all specialties that are in contact with elderly people need to advocate for all vaccinations.
- **HCPs Educational Campaign on New Vaccine Technology** - Increase knowledge of vaccine technology among healthcare professionals across all specialties, nurses and pharmacists. An online training program will offer a deep understanding of the various technologies, their mechanisms, and each technology's pros and cons.
- **An HCP Focused Material Vaccinations Campaign** - Two Lives One-Shot - A campaign communicating the benefits from maternal vaccinations to be organised, targeting both the gynaecologists and the pediatricians.
- **Material Vaccinations Social Media Campaign to the Public** - Two Lives One-Shot - A social media campaign targeting pregnant women (who during pregnancy are searching online for information) answering the most frequently asked questions informing on the importance of vaccinations to protect herself and the child.

## LIFE COURSE SUGGESTED ACTIONS AND CAMPAIGNS 2021/22

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- **2021 Expert Working Group on Increasing Maternal Vaccination Rates Across Europe** - An Expert Group should be established on Strategies to increase pregnant women's vaccinations as an integral part of a Life Course Immunisation Policy and Approach.
- **HCP-led Pharmacovigilance Task Force** - Assessing any issues reported after the COVID vaccination and preparing them to immediately dispel any misconception that could create hesitancy amongst the public.
- **HCP-led Vaccination and Health System Resilience Planning Groups** - making the most of the heightened awareness among the policy planners to plan and prevent the next crisis through a life-course vaccination approach instead of moving reactively to the next crisis without learning from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **2021 Expert Working Group on HCP Vaccination and Leading by Example** - An Expert Group should be established on Interventions to increase vaccination uptake among healthcare professionals - to demonstrate the importance of vaccines by advocating to patients and leading by example.