Vaccine Management

The success of immunization activities relies on a sustainable and efficient supply chain of affordable vaccines of assured quality and its delivery through a reliable cold chain system. Vaccines are sensitive products in their makeup; without being stored in the right conditions (generally, temperatures between 2-8 degrees Celsius), vaccinations can easily be rendered useless. Africa has challenging vaccine and cold chain management landscape where factors such as scarcity of trained professionals, hot temperatures, and paucity of suitable arteries for transport pose considerable problems.

Countries in the Region need to ensure that they have efficient vaccine management and logistics systems for vaccines delivery. High vaccine quality must be maintained at every stage of the continuum between the vaccine production plant and the ultimate point of vaccine administration. Consequences in interrupting the cold chain system can result in financial loss due to damaged of vaccines and continued spread of vaccine preventable as a result of using non potent vaccines.

The Role of Immunization and Vaccine Development Department

In the area of vaccine and cold chain management, the WHO AFRO/IVD’s role consists of providing technical and financial support to countries in the Region by advising on vaccines procurement systems, building capacity for vaccine forecasting at national, provincial and district levels and establishing sound cold chain systems and effective vaccine management.

Challenges

**Vaccines quality assurance:** Quality of vaccines can only be assured when there is no interruption in the cold chain system.

**Vaccines management during campaigns:** Proper planning in national immunization campaigns is crucial in optimizing use of available quality vaccines.

**Limited numbers of trained personnel:** proper skills and expertise are often lacking and are crucial to ensuring the use of proper procedures for proper vaccines and cold chain management.

Progress

To ensure adequate supplies of vaccine and thus uninterrupted immunisation services optimal cold chain capacity is necessary. Computerized tools for efficient vaccine forecasting, and management have been developed and are now in use in the Region.

Our Goals

The overall goal in effective vaccine management in Africa is to ensure that all Member States have a sustainable and reliable supply of affordable vaccines of assured quality to better manage their national immunisation programmes. The key strategies implemented are to provide countries with adequate reference guidelines and tools, updated information, appropriate capacity building and resource mobilisation for effective vaccine and cold chain management.

Our Accomplishments

- Development of computerized software for vaccine management and forecast.
- Cold chain assessments conducted in countries preparing new vaccine introduction into national vaccination programs, resulting in upgrading of their respective cold chain capacities.
- Vaccine management assessments and procurement system assessments conducted in 14 countries.
• All countries reported to WHO/AFRO that they have created budget lines for funding national vaccination campaigns.

Our Partners
Vaccine management is a massive undertaking, and requires the engagement of partnerships involving countries, bilateral agencies, international organizations and public and private partners in support of vaccine and cold chain management by providing material, human and financial resources as needed. Additional partners in funding for cold chain equipment and transportation are: GAVI, WB, ADB, the JICA and UNICEF.

Helpful Resources or Websites
www.who.int/immunization_delivery/systems_policy/logistics/en/
www.who.int/vaccines-documents/DocsPDF05/796_Final_version.pdf

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