Call for nominations for experts to serve on a Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) Working Group on Meningococcal Vaccines and Vaccination

Background

The WHO position paper on meningococcal vaccines was published in November 2011, followed by a specific update (February 2015) providing guidance on meningococcal A conjugate vaccine introduction into the routine childhood immunization programme in the African meningitis belt. Since then, a significant body of information has emerged in terms of disease incidence, carriage, vaccination impact and vaccine research and development. Notably:

- protein based vaccines against meningococcal B have been licensed and used at public health scale in some countries;
- quadrivalent conjugates vaccines have been more widely used;
- around 300 million people across the meningitis belt have received the meningococcal A conjugate vaccine since December 2010, while 8 countries have introduced the vaccine into their national immunization programme, resulting in a dramatic impact on disease and carriage;
- cases and outbreaks of non-A meningococci have continued to strike in the belt with large meningococcal C epidemics;
- new multivalent – including pentavalent ACWYX – conjugate candidate vaccines are in clinical development.

In addition, WHO and partners have engaged on the development of a “roadmap to defeat meningitis by 2030”, with a focus on meningococcal and other bacterial meningitis, and for which vaccines and vaccination are among the key pillars.

In this context WHO will establish a SAGE Working Group on Meningococcal Vaccines and Vaccination.

Terms of Reference

Working Group is established to prepare a SAGE review of new evidence and advice to WHO on the use of meningococcal vaccines in order to mitigate the public health impact of the disease, including to reduce the risk of epidemics and to prevent health emergencies. Specifically, this will include updating recommendations for the optimal use of meningococcal conjugate vaccines in the meningitis belt and globally; as well developing recommendations for the use of meningococcal B vaccines. The Working Group will also prepare a SAGE review of the plan and advice to WHO on the global roadmap to defeat meningitis by 2030, focusing on bacterial meningitis and equitable and sustainable access to vaccines, diagnosis and treatment.
In order to prepare for the review, the Working Group will provide technical advice and support to the WHO secretariat through reviews of:

1. The essential evidence required for updating or developing policy recommendations for meningococcal vaccines, including on strategies for use of vaccines to respond to epidemics;
2. The updated epidemiological data on meningococcal carriage, disease, mortality and epidemics, globally and in different regions and population groups;
3. The evidence on the use of meningococcal vaccines, globally and in different regions and population groups, including in outbreak response settings, with a particular focus on protein based vaccines against group B meningococcus and conjugate vaccines against all other meningococci;
4. The evidence on the safety, immunogenicity and efficacy of candidate vaccines, in various target age groups and using different schedules.
5. The results from modelling studies on the impact of different vaccination strategies.
6. The summary of the above data for presentation to SAGE and the draft recommendations for consideration by SAGE. These recommendations will be used to update the WHO position paper on meningococcal vaccines.
7. The draft *Defeating meningitis by 2030* global roadmap and the draft advice for consideration by SAGE.

**Timelines**

The SAGE Working Group on Meningococcal Vaccines and Vaccination is expected to be set up and start functioning in mid-2019. It is expected to accomplish its task and tentatively present its conclusions and recommendations to the SAGE in 2020. Depending on preliminary findings and availability of data, it may carry on for up to another year.

**Expertise needed in the Working Group**

- Epidemiology and immunization policy
- Diagnosis and treatment of meningitis
- Meningococcal vaccines
- Pneumococcal and Group B streptococcus vaccines
- Statistics and mathematical modelling
- Social anthropology and heath emergencies
- Immunization programmes and service delivery
- Information and Advocacy
Application Process

Proposals for nominations should be sent by email to sageexecsec@who.int with a Curriculum Vitae, indication of relevant expertise, and a completed declaration of interest form. Only complete nominations received by Wednesday 7 November 2018 will be considered.

Declaration of interests form

Information on the purpose, structure and functioning of SAGE Working Groups