Criteria to determine if a given vaccination is a routine or supplemental dose

Introduction:

While there are a multitude of strategies that can be used to deliver immunization services, there are only two types of doses that can be given -- routine or supplemental. The main distinction is that a supplemental dose is "additional" or "extra" to the doses required by the national immunization schedule and may, or may not, be recorded in the child's immunization record. On the other hand, a routine dose is one which is prescribed according to the national immunization schedule, is administered based on the vaccination history of each individual, counts towards "fully immunized" status, and must be recorded on immunization cards and registers.

Historically, supplemental doses of vaccination were commonly given in large-scale campaigns and routine doses were provided in fixed site health centres, through outreach services or by mobile teams. Mass supplementary activities were organized to provide broad scale, population level immunity to reduce/interrupt transmission of selected diseases with the goal of outbreak control, elimination, or eradication. Supplementary doses were provided during a condensed time period irrespective of individual history of vaccination.

Today, however, with the implementation of Periodic Intensification of Routine Immunization (PIRI) activities this distinction has become blurred and some campaign-style activities provide supplemental and routine doses simultaneously. Therefore, the delivery strategy alone can no longer be reliably used to define the nature of the vaccination dose.

Attention must now shift to using criteria associated with the decision-making process of the vaccinator and the recording practices in order to distinguish whether an individual (a child, adolescent or an adult) is receiving a routine or supplemental dose. Both immunization managers and donors/partners must be aware of and use these criteria in order to correctly and consistently refer to the type of dose that any given immunization activity is delivering.

This clarification is important to ensure that the necessary recording and reporting practices are planned and properly implemented, and that in turn, the accuracy and reliability of reported national routine coverage is improved.

Routine Dose Criteria:

All of the following 3 criteria must be met in order for a vaccination to be defined and counted as a routine dose.

1. Vaccinator screens the child/individual for age, vaccination history, and contraindications using vaccination card and/or caregiver recall and makes the
The decision to vaccinate only if the child/individual is due according to the national immunization schedule.

- If the vaccination history of a child/individual is not known (no card or caregiver cannot recall) he/she is assumed to be unvaccinated and the vaccinator provides the vaccinations that are indicated by the national immunization schedule (starting any series of vaccinations with the first dose).

- Children/Individuals younger than the recommended age of vaccination (per national schedule) are not vaccinated. Older children/individuals who have delayed or missed doses are vaccinated per the national policy.

2. The vaccination/dose and the date it was administered is recorded on all of the following: Child Health/Immunization Card, register, and session tally sheet. The vaccination dose is reported on the monthly summary.

   - Data tools and systems must record and report separately those doses given to individuals within the recommended target age group and those outside this group.

   - If an activity-specific registry is used, information recorded in this registry should be transferred to the master registry to facilitate complete record keeping.

3. The vaccination is reported in the local and national administrative data collection systems, and in the "Administrative Coverage" section of the WHO/UNICEF Joint Reporting Form (JRF).

**Supplementary Dose Criteria:**

By default, any vaccination not meeting the above "Routine Dose Criteria" is deemed to be a supplemental dose of vaccination and should be reported separately.

In the WHO/UNICEF Joint Reporting Form (JRF) they should be included in the section "Supplemental Activities".