EMPHNET
The Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network

امفنت
الشبكة الشرق أوسطية للصحة المجتمعية

The Way Forward for Pertussis Control in the Middle East and North Africa: Focus on Maternal Immunization

Project Information

- **Department: Public Health Programs**
- **Unit: Polio and Routine Immunization**

OBJECTIVES

1) Create a regional network of experts in Pertussis and maternal immunization policies in Middle East and North Africa (MENA).

2) Share successful international and local experiences in pertussis control.

3) Understand the drivers and barriers for Tdap introduction in Pregnancy in MENA countries.

4) Raise the value of Tdap use in pregnancy as a regional priority aligned with IA 2030, to reduce the burden of disease in younger infants.

REGIONS OF WORK

Ten EMR/MENA countries were engaged in this project, from the Gulf to North Africa.

BENEFICIARIES

Countries of the MENA region, including their national immunization programmes and NITAGs, which benefit from regional recommendations to accelerate pertussis control policies.

PROJECT PHASES

The project was a single-phase project, completed through a four-day Expert Network Meeting (ENM) in Amman, Jordan, which formulated region-specific recommendations and a roadmap outlining the path from decision-making to implementation for pertussis and maternal immunization policies in the Middle East and North Africa.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

'The Way Forward for Pertussis Control in the Middle East and North Africa: Focus on Maternal Immunization' is a one-year project that established a regional collaboration and networking platform to enhance understanding of pertussis epidemiology, surveillance, burden of disease, and control measures, focusing on maternal immunization for young infants in the MENA region. In March 2024, EMPHNET formed a technical working group (TWG) of international and regional experts to prepare the agenda, technical material, and facilitation of the Expert Network Meeting (ENM).

The four-day ENM was held in Amman, Jordan in August 2024 with 24 participants and facilitators, covering epidemiology and surveillance, vaccine types and control strategies, decision-making on maternal immunization, and the roadmap from decision-making to implementation, through presentations and group work by country cluster. It produced recommendations on planning and strategies, the implementation roadmap, communication and advocacy, and information sharing.

Project Start and End Date	**December 2023 - December 2024**
Partner Organizations	**Sanofi Pasteur, Baylor College, WHO/EMRO and regional and country-specific experts.**
Funded by	**Sanofi Pasteur**

Currently . . .

Pertussis can seriously affect infants too young to be fully immunized, and control in the EMR region remains fragile, with challenges including low awareness and a lack of recommendations for maternal immunization and maternal care services. The ENM established a regional network of experts from 10 countries and highlighted the need to strengthen surveillance and laboratory capacity, develop regional guidance on pertussis surveillance performance indicators, build NITAG capacity, and design a communication and advocacy strategy.

What's next . . .

Next steps identified at the workshop include sharing best practices between countries, and specifying the networking mechanism and the roles and responsibilities of each partner. Participating countries will be classified by the readiness of their maternal immunization platform, with tailored action points recommended, supporting guidelines that expedite policies on pertussis control in infancy.

GHD|EMPHNET Information: Global Health Development (GHD) Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET) works at achieving its mission by responding to public health needs with deliberate efforts that allow for health promotion and disease prevention.

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