



FIP Development Goals

Vaccination: Benefits beyond specific disease prevention

Summaries from the FIP digital events programme

2023




International
Pharmaceutical
Federation

Colophon

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1 Introduction

Vaccination, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), stands as a fundamental and effective means of safeguarding individuals against harmful diseases. Vaccines offer crucial protection against a range of infectious diseases, preventing illness and often providing immunity throughout an individual's life.¹ The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the pivotal role of vaccines, particularly in preventing COVID-19 infections. Beyond individual health, widespread vaccination contributes to community immunity, reducing the overall prevalence of diseases and improving public health. Beyond individual and community immunity, vaccines have benefits beyond disease protection.

These include safeguarding vulnerable populations, such as older adults who may be more susceptible to severe complications, and reducing the risk of other health issues such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and arthritis. Moreover, vaccines play a central role in reducing mortality rates and curbing the economic and social costs associated with preventable diseases.

Overcoming barriers to vaccine access is paramount, leading to the endorsement of the Immunisation Agenda 2030 by the World Health Assembly, aiming to ensure equitable access across all stages of life. The International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) has been instrumental in promoting vaccine equity and advocating a life-course approach to vaccination. Through publications, events, and partnerships, FIP has played a key role in promoting the importance of vaccination. One of FIP's activities is a series of events called "Vaccination: Benefits beyond specific disease prevention". The series, comprised of four digital events, aims to enhance the understanding of disease burden and the positive downstream effects of vaccinations. The series also highlights the contributions, activities, and tools that pharmacists can lead and utilise to promote healthy ageing in the practice setting, as well as ways to strengthen resource utilisation and implementation strategies.

This report provides a summary of the outcomes of two of the events that mostly took part as panel discussions (Part 3 and Part 4), highlighting key insights from panel discussions that showcased the burden of diseases and the risks and costs of not widening access to vaccination as well as the key role that pharmacists can play in life course immunisation.

2 Vaccination: Benefits beyond specific disease prevention — Part 3

Summary

“Vaccination: Benefits beyond specific disease prevention — Part 3”, which took place on 13 September 2023, centred on enhancing the understanding of disease burden, vaccination impact, and the risks and costs associated with not broadening access to vaccination. The event also aimed to enhance resource utilisation and implementation strategies while highlighting proficiency in vaccination management. The event took the format of a panel discussion in which experts joined in to share their knowledge and expertise on the topic.

Link to the event: [Part 3](#)

Learning objectives

1. Enhance understanding of disease burden and vaccination impact.
2. Strengthen resource utilisation and implementation strategies.
3. Highlight proficiency in vaccination management through case studies.

Event moderators, facilitators and panellists

Moderator: Lina Bader, FIP lead for equity, sustainability policy and development

Facilitator: Nour Eltahla, FIP projects coordinator for equity, sustainability policy and development,

Panellists:

- Jane Barratt, secretary general, International Federation on Ageing, Canada
- Peter Guthrey, senior pharmacist—strategic policy, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, Australia
- Esther McNamara, senior health policy lead, International Longevity Centre, United Kingdom
- Sachiko Ozawa, associate professor, Division of Practice Advancement and Clinical Education, UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy, United States

Panel discussion highlights

Vaccination is one of the most effective measures to maintain the health of individuals by reducing the spread of diseases, particularly within at-risk groups that are highly susceptible to communicable diseases. Vaccines prevent vulnerable groups from becoming infected with diseases and developing serious complications. During the digital event, Jane Barratt shared that, at the time of the pandemic, the majority of people who died in any country were older adults, particularly those in long-term facilities. For that reason, the International Federation on Ageing (IFA) conducted a 19-country study to examine the presence of immunisation policies in national ageing strategies of long-term care facilities. The results indicated that none of those countries had immunisation policies within their national age care strategies. The IFA therefore acted upon the gap they identified by notifying all governments of these countries that no systems were in place and highlighting the urgency of having policies and strategies towards life course immunisation.

Ensuring that vaccines are equitably accessible, affordable and timely for all ages and for vulnerable groups can be accomplished in a variety of ways, starting with designing and implementing immunisation plans across the life course, rather than just in the early stages, as a means to minimise adverse health events throughout life. Secondly, developing strategies and policies that not only focus on implementing vaccination plans but that also address patient

health and vaccine literacy is essential. This includes finding effective approaches to address vaccine hesitancy, educating patients on the benefits of vaccines and correcting any misinformation they may have.

Thirdly, it is imperative that international organisations actively engage and collaborate with all stakeholders involved to advocate equitable and fair access to vaccines for everyone. For instance, as Sachiko Ozawa mentioned, working with stakeholders involved in resource allocation such as finance ministers, politicians and health economists is crucial. Resources in vaccination programmes are essential for ensuring the health and well-being of the community as a whole, especially in low and middle-income countries. Understanding and using the economic evidence makes allocating resources effective, efficient and equitable. Since health impacts individuals, communities, and countries, it is equally important to collaborate with all stakeholders involved to allocate and use resources towards health efficiently. Several tools are available to compare the cost of vaccination with the cost of treatments, hospitalisations, disabilities and deaths from preventable diseases. These tools can help provide evidence when communicating with stakeholders outside the health industry, particularly those that compare the cost of vaccines with its return on investment, to demonstrate the value of vaccination to the health and economy of a country and what the detrimental effects of not investing in vaccination could be. Esther McNamara shared another example on the cost of pneumococcal disease to the British National Health Service in 2019, estimated to be GBP 7m, versus the GBP 30 for a pneumococcal vaccine, highlighting the major impact that vaccines could have on the health system and the economy.

In addition, there is potential to learn from the contributions of many initiatives to improve vaccination rates. For example, the IFA investigated the national immunisation technical advisory groups in 34 countries to examine the functional process indicators of the WHO. The results showed that only two of the 34 countries had representation from an expert on adult immunisation, signifying a huge gap in the efforts to achieve equitable access to vaccines for everyone.

Lastly, learning from past experiences is another important factor to consider. COVID-19 enhanced the adaptability of vaccine delivery policies and strategies, ultimately improving access inequities.

Since pharmacists are the most accessible healthcare providers, they can play a significant role in improving vaccination efforts from advocacy to administration. They can participate in organising immunisation campaigns, ordering, storing and administering vaccines, and reporting adverse effects. Community pharmacists in particular can contribute by proactively advocating vaccination and educating their patients on vaccines, thereby improving patient health literacy. For instance, when administering one vaccine, the opportunity arises to discuss and recommend other available vaccines. Peter Guthrey mentioned an example from Australia on the implementation of national vaccination schedules tailored to different age groups and to which pharmacists can contribute. In addition, from January 2024, Australian pharmacists will receive an administration fee, thereby augmenting their role in advocating vaccination and educating patients about vaccines and their broader benefits. The role of Australian pharmacists in vaccine administration has also evolved over the past 10 years, but especially after the pandemic, resulting in 50% of the ongoing booster programmes as well as 25% of the influenza vaccines being administered by pharmacists in community pharmacies.

In conclusion, it is essential to continue building on all those efforts to avoid regression. Pharmacists are urged to leverage the lessons learned throughout the pandemic and advocate for their profession to be involved in policy-setting and decision-making around vaccines.

3 Vaccination: Benefits beyond specific disease prevention — Part 4

Summary

The fourth event in the series provided a summary of the key take home points from the series as well as a presentation of FIP's new and existing educational resources on the topic. Panellists discussed the downstream impacts of vaccination in addition to continuing to build on previous discussions instituted during the series. This event also focused on actions and priorities for pharmacy and FIP.

Link to the event: [Part 4](#)

Learning objectives

1. Present new educational resources by FIP on the topic.
2. Summarise the key take home points from the series thus far.
3. Discuss the downstream impacts of vaccination.
4. Focus on actions and priorities for pharmacy and FIP.

Learning objectives

Moderator: Lina Bader, FIP lead for equity, sustainability policy and development

Panellists:

- Dalia Bajis, FIP lead for provision and partnerships
- Eric J. Yager, associate professor, microbiology; chair, Department of Allied Health Sciences; director, Pre-Pharmacy Programme; Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, USA
- Nicola Veronese, senior researcher, University of Palermo, Italy

Discussion outcomes

Vaccines have a critical role in the eradication of and protection against global diseases such as flu, smallpox and polio. It is highly important to consider the varying therapies and preventive measures that are available and can help derive better health outcomes. Eric Yager highlighted the importance of achieving herd immunity through increasing vaccine uptake rates, particularly for frequently mutating pathogens such as COVID-19 and influenza. While antimicrobial drug resistance and antiviral drug resistance can arise, vaccine resistance is fortunately rare, meaning vaccination can therefore be a great preventive measure.

Vaccines are equally important to younger and older generations, not only for the prevention of specific diseases such as pneumonia but prevention of other diseases such as cardiovascular diseases and stroke. Therefore, it is imperative to integrate epidemiological research with translational results. For instance, there is a lack of information regarding vaccine effectiveness in preventing diseases, one of the key mechanisms that needs to be addressed in the future. In addition, basic research should be done to improve the delivery of vaccines and address global public perceptions through designing surveys.

Several diseases are more common in older adults, such as cancers, cardiovascular diseases and dementia. From the point of view of a geriatrician, Nicola Veronese mentioned the example of patients with dementia who face higher co-morbidities and the positive impact that vaccines such as influenza vaccines can have on them. It is essential for healthcare professionals to prioritise vaccination for these patients as a preventive measure, particularly to avoid health complications. Therefore, one way of promoting vaccination is by engaging in communications with healthcare

professionals and caregivers as well as with other individuals around vulnerable groups to highlight the importance of vaccination in older adults. Recent studies underscore the significance of influenza vaccination, indicating a 29% lower risk of dementia and cognitive disorders. A large European study in September 2023 further explored factors affecting influenza and pneumococcal vaccination, emphasising disparities related to poverty.² These findings underscore the importance of integrating research into everyday clinical practice.

The panellists also discussed the education of healthcare professionals, including pharmacists, and its impact on providing better education and research opportunities on vaccination to develop a deeper understanding of the importance and benefits of vaccines and the mechanisms by which they work. With adequate education, training and professional development opportunities, pharmacists can achieve the competence to perform a series of roles that can significantly contribute to improving vaccination coverage, providing evidence-based advice on vaccines, addressing vaccines hesitancy, administering vaccines and managing vaccine records.

Eric Yager shared an example from the Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences in the USA, whereby one of the most impactful experiences at the start of the pandemic was when students and faculty members collaborated to stress the impact of vaccination by spreading information using their area of expertise. For instance, pharmacist colleagues and the college have several student-managed community pharmacies that were used as a contact point for COVID at-risk populations, such as older people and individuals without access to insurance. Pharmacists played a key role in communicating the benefits of vaccines to the community. Additionally, public health professionals were also involved in crafting messages to community members to enhance their trust in vaccination and increase vaccination rates. Through the collaboration of different sectors in healthcare, there was a capability of making a difference locally. In this regard, it is important to take such actions on a global scale to educate the population to ensure that vaccine initiatives will maintain their important role in the future.

Finally, Dalia Bajis shared key points on the vital role that FIP plays in advancing the pharmacy profession and advocating pharmacists' involvement in vaccination on a global, regional and national scale. With a focus on its 21 Development Goals, FIP places high priority on vaccination, aligning it with 17 of these goals to underscore its significance for both pharmacy and global health. FIP's decade-long commitment to vaccination is evident through various initiatives, including signing the WHO Astana Declaration in 2018 and launching digital programmes to address the essential role of pharmacy in providing vaccines, particularly during the pandemic, but also since.

FIP's commitment is further exemplified by its extensive publications, educational programmes, collaborations and webinars, all aimed at promoting vaccination awareness, confidence and global coverage. Through evidence generation, professional development opportunities and collaboration with global partners, FIP consistently strives to enhance pharmacy's role in preventing diseases, ensuring safety and contributing to public health.

4 Conclusions

The FIP series “Vaccination: Benefits beyond specific disease prevention” aims to enhance the understanding of disease burden and the positive downstream effects of vaccinations, emphasising the role of pharmacists in promoting healthy ageing and offering insights on resource utilisation and implementation strategies.

Some of the key insights emerging from this series include:

- Vaccine benefits go beyond disease prevention, which impacts populations’ health, especially vulnerable individuals like older adults.
- Vaccines are proven to be cost-effective by reducing healthcare expenses and, in order to allocate more resources towards health, it is imperative to collaborate and engage with all stakeholders involved.
- Improving the vaccination rates among older adults requires a multi-faceted approach that involves targeted immunisation plans, stakeholder engagement, advocacy at national and international levels, as well as learning from past experiences.
- Pharmacists’ role in vaccination goes beyond the administration of vaccines to addressing misinformation about vaccines through effective conversations with the community.
- Educating healthcare professionals about vaccines is essential to ensure they can effectively address global vaccine disparities and increase vaccine coverage rates.

It is therefore important to continue building on the efforts that were made in the past, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, to avoid regression and to continue the work towards equitable access to health and healthcare.

5 References

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