The challenge of vaccine hesitancy in the European Union

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AIM SEMINAR
Vaccine hesitancy, a global trend which threatens public health
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Outline

- Competence

- Political context

- Characteristics/challenges/requirements

- Joint action on vaccination 2018

- Policy initiative on vaccination 2018
Vaccination is a competence of the Member States

On the basis of Article 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union the Commission is supporting Member States in encouraging their cooperation, while fully respecting national competences in the area of public health.
Council conclusions on vaccinations as an effective tool in public health

- Evidence-based, cost-effective, safe and efficient immunisation systems is an integral part of a well-functioning health system

- To inform the population in order to raise its trust in vaccination programmes, using appropriate tools and communication campaigns also by engaging opinion leaders, civil society and relevant stakeholders

- To coordinate activities aimed at advocating and encouraging the use of vaccines included in national vaccination programmes by sharing information on communication plans and campaigns for vaccine introduction
Characteristics of vaccine hesitancy

- Vaccine hesitancy is a **behavioural phenomenon** that is vaccine and context specific.

- Vaccine attitudes are ranging from total acceptance to complete refusal.

- Vaccine-hesitant individuals
  - Are a **heterogeneous group** in the middle of this continuum.
  - May refuse some vaccines, but agree to others.
  - Delay vaccines or accept vaccines but are **unsure** in doing so.
Challenges related to vaccine hesitancy

- **Lack** of validated and standarized **tools to assess and measure** hesitancy

- **Lack of data on vaccine hesitancy levels** in the populations where the interventions were tested
  - Special attention needs to be paid to differences and similarities between routine immunisation programmes and mass vaccination campaigns in different settings and contexts

- **Evaluation** of interventions
  - Most studies have not defined vaccine hesitancy in the study population and have only measured **change in vaccine uptake**, **without assessing whether the intervention had any impact on hesitancy**
Requirements

- **Increase the understanding of vaccine hesitancy**, its determinants and the rapidly changing challenges it entails.

- **Structures and organizational capacity** to decrease hesitancy and increase acceptance of vaccines at all levels.

- **Sharing of lessons learnt and effective practices** from various countries and settings.

- **Development, validation and implementation of new tools** to address hesitancy.
Joint action on vaccination

€ 3 million EU co-funding

Coordination by INSERM (France)

Participation of 20 countries (among them 17 EU MS)

JA currently under preparation, starting early 2018

Involvement of ECDC, EMA, WHO, DG RTD
Joint action on vaccination

- Establish **shared mapping of best practices** among stakeholders and **analyse barriers and enablers** behind high and low vaccination coverage rates.

- Set-up **social and online media monitoring infrastructures** to conduct **real time public vaccine confidence monitoring** through social media.

- Provide guidance on the **evaluation of the impact of intervention strategies** to address vaccine hesitancy.

- Provide guidance and share best practice on the development and provision of **in-service training for health professionals**.
Joint action on vaccination

- Provide guidance and/or promote the exchange of best practices in the field of vaccine injury compensation programmes
- Assess and describe European vaccine reminder and recall systems to inform future development of such systems
- Integrate immunisation information systems into e-health network to
  - Empower communication towards patients and health professionals to facilitate understandings of benefits of vaccination
EU policy initiative on vaccination

- President Juncker’s State of the Union Address 2017 touching on ongoing large measles outbreaks in a number of countries

- Commission will present an initiative on vaccination in from of a Council recommendation as part of the Commission’s Work Programme 2018

- Roadmap on "Strengthened cooperation against vaccine preventable diseases"

- Public consultation
Commission

- Use vaccines as the case study for combatting fake news in the EU

- Possible initiative regarding EU-wide advocacy coalition
Thank you for your attention

Commission web page on vaccination:

Conference web page:
http://ec.europa.eu/health/vaccination/events/ev_20121016_en.htm