The Immunization Program Update in India - 2013

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National EVM study concluded.

The effective vaccine management (EVM) is a global WHO-UNICEF joint diagnostic tool for immunization supply chain management leading to an improvement plan. EVM helps to identify the level of adherence to policies, practices and procedures for effective cold chain and vaccine management. The improvement plan is an intervention to fix immunization supply chain issues through annual Health PIPs. Nine indicators were used to assess performance of the vaccine stores. They are as follows: 1)Vaccine Arrival Process, 2)Vaccine Storage Temperature, 3)Storage Capacity, 4) Building, CC Equip. & Transport, 5)Maintenance & Repair, 6)Stock Management, 7) Distribution, 8)Vaccine Management Practices, and 9)MIS & Supportive Functions.

The Government of India, with support from UNICEF, by the end of 2013 concluded the national effective vaccine management (EVM) study across 114 vaccine stores. The states assessed included Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, J&K, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, MP, Rajasthan, Tripura, and UP. Knowledge of use of vaccine vial monitors (VVM) was found good at more than 90% of the sites. A score of 80% and above is good performance.

India Pledges to eliminate measles by 2020

India & other South Asian countries have pledged to eliminate measles by 2020 at the 69th session of WHO’s Regional Committee for South-East Asia. As part of the measles mortality reduction strategy, India introduced second dose of measles into the Routine Immunization (RI) schedule. In 14 low-performing states, it introduced measles second dose through a catch-up campaign followed by introduction in the RI schedule. In the rest of the states, measles second dose was introduced directly into the RI schedule.

The three-year measles catch-up campaign comes to an end in 2013. This was the largest injectable immunization campaign in the world. As against the target to vaccinate 135 million children with MCV2, 118.2 million children received MCV2. 367 districts in 14 states conducted campaigns in 3 different phases, achieving 85% of the targeted coverage. There has been steep decrease in measles outbreaks in campaign. The challenge ahead is to enhance coverage across the country for sustaining high population immunity that will prevent measles outbreaks and reduce childhood mortality due to measles.

Polio SMNet promoting RI

The Polio Social Mobilization Network (SMNet) is one of the key strategies behind the success of polio eradication in Bihar and Uttarakhand. This will now strengthen efforts in promoting RI messages and other key behaviours such as hand washing and breastfeeding among targeted communities.

SMNet supports both state governments during RI weeks in micro-planning, developing communication materials, tracking infants, orienting frontline workers on communication skills and counselling, facilitating due lists, monitoring and providing follow-up/support on logistics for RI sessions, focussed mainly in some of the lowest coverage areas.

Three-year GAVI support to improve immunization coverage

The Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) has proposed to support the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, with a $107 million fund to strengthen health systems over a period of three years (2014-2016). This is to achieve increased immunization coverage in India’s 12 high-priority states (with coverage below 61%): Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland, and Rajasthan.

The 5 specific objectives under the proposed support will be to:
1. Strengthen vaccine logistics and cold chain management
2. Design and implement an electronic vaccine intelligence network (eVIN)
3. Increase demand for RI through innovations in behaviour change communication (BCC)
4. Strengthen the evidence base through monitoring and data collection

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New branding for National Vaccine Vans

| Happenings |
5. Leverage the success of the National Polio Surveillance Project to strengthen RI service delivery.

The proposal once approved, the overall coordination of the activities will be by the Ministry of Health with implementation support from UNICEF, WHO, UNDP and ITSU (Immunization Technical Support Unit) in specific areas listed above.

New branding for National Vaccine Vans

Following launch of a new logo and communication campaign for Routine Immunization in the early 2013, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India has rebranded the national vaccine delivery vans. The new branding contains key messages on Routine Immunization (RI) and JSSK.

As a pilot in selected districts, a Teeka Express was launched on August 1, 2013 in Alwar District of Rajasthan. These vans are designed to carry vaccines from district vaccine stores to outreach sessions, additionally serving as IEC vans promoting key messages on RI.

References

1. Catch-Up: An Update of India Immunization Programme, September 2013, MOHFW, GOI.