



33 Days to Power-up Immunisation Campaign

Policy Brief for World Polio Day on October 24, 2023

Introduction

Poliomyelitis, commonly known as polio, is a viral infection characterized by muscle paralysis, and in severe cases, death, particularly when it affects respiratory muscles. Efforts have been taken towards eradicating this disease, with only two polio endemic countries remaining – Pakistan and Afghanistan. However, persistent challenges persist, including the presence of poliovirus variants in several countries, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon, Ghana, and Nigeria. [Placeholder to add, from reliable sources, 1 or 2 sentences on the burden of polio in your country, like number of cases every year and polio variant type, and recent effort by your government to address polio cases]

The occasion of World Polio Day on October 24, 2023, themed "Make Polio History," provides a unique opportunity to recommit to and take actions that ensures sustained progress in the battle to end polio everywhere.

Poliomyelitis

- Polio primarily afflicts children under the age of five and is highly contagious.
- The virus spreads through contact with infected fecal matter, contaminated water or food, or respiratory droplets.
- While most infected individuals remain asymptomatic, some exhibit minor symptoms, while severe cases can result in paralysis, muscle weakness, and fatality.

Types of Polio

- Three strains of wild poliovirus (WPV) exist, namely types 1, 2, and 3.
- Type 2 was successfully eradicated in 1999, and type 3 followed suit in 2020.
- As of 2022, endemic wild poliovirus type 1 remains confined to Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- Poliovirus variants (cVDPV) persist in select countries characterized by low vaccination coverage and inadequate hygiene practices.

Prevention of Polio

- While there is no cure for polio, prevention is achievable through vaccination and enhanced hygiene practices.
- Since the inception of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative in 1988, a collaborative effort involving governments, WHO, Rotary International, CDC, UNICEF, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and Gavi, cases attributed to wild poliovirus have plummeted by 99.9% due to heightened awareness, vaccination campaigns, and robust surveillance.

Polio Vaccination



- Multiple doses of polio vaccine confer lifelong protection.
- Two vaccines are employed – oral polio vaccine (OPV) and inactivated polio vaccine (IPV).
- To arrest transmission and avert outbreaks, it is imperative to maintain high vaccination coverage.

Polio Eradication Strategy 2022-2026: Delivering on a Promise

- In 2020, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) initiated a comprehensive review of the polio eradication strategy.
- Stakeholders collectively identified enduring impediments to polio eradication, guiding the formulation of a strengthened plan.
- This enhanced strategy is centered on achieving and sustaining a world free of polio by prioritizing implementation and accountability.
- Key focal points in the Polio Eradication Strategy 2022-2026: Delivering on a Promise are:
 - Cutting outbreak response times;
 - Increasing vaccine demand;
 - Transforming campaign effectiveness;
 - Working systematically through integration;
 - Increasing access in inaccessible areas;
 - Transitioning towards government ownership;
 - Improving decision-making and accountability.

Request to Policymakers

- National and State governments with immunization stakeholders should maintain unwavering commitment and accountability in halting polio transmission.
- The Ministries of Health at the national and subnational levels, with their EPI teams and centers of disease control, should prioritize immediate, high-quality outbreak response, encompassing expanded vaccination drives, intensified surveillance, and ensuring the safety of vaccinators and support personnel.
- The Ministries of Health at the national and subnational levels, with their EPI teams, should strengthen integration efforts spanning polio vaccination, routine immunization, and other critical health initiatives in polio-affected communities.

[Your Organization Name]

[Contact Information]