

Building Global Momentum for Adult Vaccination Policy within COVID-19 Series:

Protecting Progress in Accessing Adult Vaccination

Executive Summary



Martha Rebour
Executive Director, Shot@Life



Mr Lars-Åke Söderlund
President, Community Pharmacy
Section, International Pharmaceutical
Federation (FIP)

13 January 2021

Context

Chronically inadequate adult vaccination coverage rates suggest that competing healthcare priorities, increasing budgetary strain and fragmentation of global health governance are key factors contributing to a devaluation of vaccines on the global scale. The novel coronavirus pandemic is providing a stark reminder of the devastating consequences of infectious diseases in today's globalized and virtually borderless world.

Evidence consistently demonstrates that at-risk groups such as older people and those with underlying chronic conditions benefit from targeted immunization policies and practices, and that vaccination is proven to reduce the burden of infectious diseases on public health systems.

Given the overwhelming global demand for COVID-19 vaccine, now is the time to call for action to recognise the value of life course vaccination policies on the global scale, and to reverse the downward trend in adult vaccination in recent times. A re-orientation of global immunization policies must ensure that safe and effective vaccines are available in a manner that leaves no one behind, regardless of age or socioeconomic background.

“Building Global Momentum for Adult Vaccination Policy within COVID-19” webinar series focuses on three key vaccination-related policy areas (prevention, access and equity) within a rights-based approach. Gathering and mobilizing knowledge at this critical time in global public health policy is necessary to advocate for implementation of immunization policy to global stakeholders, in line with the UN Sustainable Development.

Executive Summary

While vaccination is one of the most successful public health measures of modern times, second only to clean water, it remains an underused public health strategy.¹ Despite progress made in improving access to adult vaccination over the years, **the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted routine immunization services on a global scale.**

During a webinar on 10th December **Ms. Martha Rebour**, Executive Director of Shot@Life and **Mr. Lars-Åke Söderlund**, President, Community Pharmacy Section of the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) explored the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the vaccination landscape with the aim of building global momentum for adult vaccination policy and protecting progress in accessing vaccinations.

Many of the people suffering the worst of the COVID-19 outbreak are also those who would benefit the most from immunization against diseases such as pneumococcal pneumonia and influenza. While global citizens wait with unprecedented demand for the development of a vaccine against COVID-19, there is a significant threat of concurrent influenza and pneumonia cases adding to the health system burden in high-and low-income countries alike.

Further complicating issues, **more than 90% of countries in the world reported an increase in vaccination hesitancy**, defined by WHO as a “delay in acceptance or refusal of vaccines despite availability of vaccination services”. Facing uncertainties, disruption, and increased burden on the healthcare system during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is vital to **protect the progress made in the vaccination narrative** and continue to advocate for the effectiveness of vaccination against influenza, pneumococcal pneumonia, shingles and tdap across the life course.

For the first time in history, the much-needed intersecting intergovernmental plans of the [UN Decade of Healthy Ageing \(2021-2031\)](#), the [New Global Vaccine Action Plan \(GVAP\)](#) and the [WHO Immunization Agenda 2030](#) provide a blueprint to consolidate and implement the most wide-ranging public health program that has the power to change the lives of current and future generations of older people.

COVID-19 has created expanded opportunities for pharmacists to be a profession to administer vaccines to reduce the health care burden. In an increasing number of countries community pharmacists are available and committed to having a more active role in vaccination strategies and acting as the first point-of-contact within the health system.

Building global momentum to more accessible equitable adult vaccination policies and programs across the globe requires improving the transfer of knowledge and guidance across disciplines, sectors, and civil society to help build the capacity of others. **Cooperation, solidarity, and accountability** must be the values that underpin multi stakeholder actions to maintain and improve vaccination rates across the life course, but especially older people and those most vulnerable.

COVID-19 has demonstrated in the most brutal way the urgent need for increased government investment in reorienting its health systems to emphasise population health promotion and prevention.

Even in the anticipated times of austerity that surround the emergence from the pandemic it is critical for public health infrastructure to be not only maintained but improved to ensure the most optimal access and equity for vaccines. This includes expansion of vaccination gateways and continuous education of those administering the vaccines.

No person, young or older, is expendable. We need a surge in global and national solidarity and the contributions of all members of society, including older people to build the global momentum necessary to advocate for adult vaccination against influenza, pneumococcal pneumonia, shingles and tdap.

Speakers

Martha Rebour
Executive Director, Shot@Life

Martha Rebour is the Executive Director of Shot@Life, a global campaign under the United Nations Foundation that aims to increase access to immunizations for children in need through UN partners.

Martha has more than 20 years of experience in strategic branding, social media marketing, creative development and consumer research for corporate and non-profit organizations.

Prior to joining the UN Foundation she worked for 10 years at Discovery Communications and oversaw marketing campaigns such as the 20th Anniversary of Shark Week, the BBC series LIFE and Mythbusters, and subsequently ran her own marketing firm where she directed strategic planning and marketing for clients such as the InterAmerican Development Bank, Ogilvy Public Relations, National Geographic, and PBS. She holds a B.A. from Colby College and an MA in French language from New York University.

Mr Lars-Åke Söderlund
President, Community Pharmacy Section of the International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP)

Lars-Åke Söderlund is an experienced community pharmacist with a strong passion for the future of pharmacy and a deep understanding of the community pharmacy's environment, as well as for the challenges for our health systems including new and changing needs. As such, Lars-Åke has an extensive experience of working together with both the Swedish healthcare sector and healthcare systems in other European countries and China, in improving health and creating a sustainable health care system.

He is President for the Community Pharmacy Section, FIP (International Pharmaceutical Federation), and member of FIPs Global Expert Advisory Group on Covid-19. He is a frequent speaker in Sweden and Internationally regarding the future of healthcare and pharmacy, with over 130 presentations internationally during the last seven years. Mr Söderlund has received several prestigious awards, such as FIP Fellow 2019 and Pharmacist of the Year in Sweden, 2020.

References

1 Plotkin, S. (2014). History of vaccination. Department Of Pediatrics, University Of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA 19104. doi: 10.1073/pnas.1400472111.

International Federation on Ageing
1 Bridgepoint Drive, Suite G.238
Toronto, ON, M4M 2B5, Canada

www.vaccines4life.com

Published 13 January 2021 © Vaccines4Life

