

Eurovaccine.net, 2012 Scope and purposes

VPD network meeting terms of reference

Background

The ECDC programme on vaccine-preventable diseases and invasive bacterial infections (VPD) was set up in 2006 and currently covers general issues concerning vaccination as well as the following diseases: diphtheria, influenza, invasive disease due to *Haemophilus influenzae*, Human papilloma virus (HPV), invasive meningococcal disease (IMD), invasive pneumococcal disease (IPD), measles, mumps, rubella, pertussis, poliomyelitis, tetanus and varicella.

The programme's activities are developed in collaboration with the international key stakeholders and immunisation experts in the European Union (EU). The programme's long-term objective is the control and elimination of VPD in the EU Member States.

The VPD programme at ECDC aims to provide:

- Scientific advice on vaccines that will support policy makers in their decisions regarding the national vaccination schedules;
- Standardised procedures for the detection and reporting of VPD outbreaks;
- High quality and comparable surveillance data, with special focus on the impact of selected vaccination (e.g. against IPD) on the epidemiology of the diseases;
- Quick reports and risk assessments in emergency situations;
- EQAs and training to strengthen and harmonise the capacities of national reference laboratories;
- Standard training to improve professionalism in the field of VPD in the EU;
- A regular newsletter that informs about new developments and policies, conferences and workshops, and comments on selected scientific publications.

In 2012 special attention has been devoted to measles and rubella elimination. The ECDC strategy supports the WHO strategy for the elimination of measles and congenital rubella infections. A specific plan of actions has been implemented aimed at supporting the Member States' effort in reaching the elimination goal. It has four key areas of intervention: evidence-based communication, data for action, strengthening public health capacities, and regional and international collaboration. Activities within each area contribute to common objectives which are translated into a set of activities in the ECDC annual and multi-year work plans.

Additionally, in order to provide guidance for policymakers in the area of public health, the VPD team publishes technical reports. ECDC technical reports present the outcome of ECDC's scientific panels, consultation groups and working groups. Authored or co-ordinated by ECDC's scientists, the reports provide evidence-based answers to scientific, public health and operational questions, including risk assessments. All technical reports are available on the ECDC website.

The VENICE network is a network of experts working at national level in the vaccination field, committed and funded by ECDC since 2008. By the mean of a rapid system to run specific surveys, VENICE has been able to react in a reasonable timeframe to any demand coming from ECDC or EC. It is coordinated by the Istituto Superiore di Sanità in Italy. The deliverables produced by this network are available in the website VENICE-CINECA.

With regard to routine surveillance activities, coordination of the activities of all European VPD networks have been gradually transferred to ECDC from 2008 up to 2011.

These include:

- the European Invasive Bacterial Diseases surveillance network (EU-IBD), former EUIBIS,
- the European diphtheria surveillance network (ESDN), former DIPNET,
- the European surveillance network for measles, mumps, rubella, congenital rubella syndrome, pertussis and varicella, former EUVAC- NET.

The VPD team is in charge of data collection, validation and analysis, of the diseases listed above. Currently reports are published on a yearly basis for Invasive Bacterial Diseases (*H. influenzae*, IMD, IPD), mumps, pertussis, tetanus, diphtheria and poliomyelitis. A monthly bulletin (EMMO) is available on the ECDC web-site and summarises the epidemiology of measles and rubella in EU. Measles and rubella data are also shared on a monthly basis with WHO-EURO in Copenhagen. Information on ECDC threats due to VPD is published on the website on a weekly basis in the Communicable Diseases Treats Report (CDTR).

Technical reports containing EQAs on IBD, diphtheria and pertussis, conducted in the National References Laboratories, are regularly published on the ECDC website.

Up to now, the European Invasive Bacterial Diseases (EU-IBD) surveillance network and the European diphtheria surveillance network (ESDN) have had biannual meetings. The pertussis surveillance network (EUpert labnet) has had one meeting since its transfer to ECDC in September 2011 (was part of former EUVAC-NET).

This year, a global meeting covering all VPD disease networks will be held, and will take place regularly from now on every two years.

Objective

The objective of the network meeting is to gather together epidemiologists and laboratory experts from the different VPD networks (EU-IBD, ESDN and EUVAC.net) in order to:

- present and discuss main epidemiological VPD findings in EU and main projects aiming to strengthen laboratory performance in MS
- discuss how to improve the quality and comparability of surveillance data and operational issues for each VPD disease
- discuss other issues of common interest on VPD in Europe (scientific advances, decision process for introduction of new vaccines in the national schedules, vaccination policies and

strategies for diseases with high morbidity and mortality in MS, such as IBD, common priorities for the MS in vaccination issues, training, etc...)

- discuss alternative and complementary ways of collecting data, other than the routine surveillance through Tessy, such as active surveillance for IPD, syndromic surveillance or burden of disease studies, with special focus on measles
- support the creation of a common platform for the interaction among experts and networking
- launching the ECDC VPD network that will support in the future all the ECDC activities in the VPD field

The meeting will combine surveillance and operational issues and scientific lectures, and it is organised in plenary and parallel sessions that are disease/network specific.

The topics covered and the format of the meeting can be found in the preliminary agenda attached.

Dates and Venue

The meeting will take place on 21-23rd of November 2012 in the facilities of Sant Joan de Deu Hospital, Barcelona, Spain.