

Dominican Republic Introduces Vaccination with the Tdap Vaccine (diphtheria, tetanus and acellular pertussis) among Pregnant Women to Improve the Protection of Newborns and Infants Not Yet Vaccinated, Contributing to Interruption of the Pertussis Outbreak in the Country

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Location	Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
Dates	26 November 2019
Participants	Zacarías Garib, Patricia Grullón, Aida Lucia Vargas, Yenny Rocio Neira
Purpose	Vaccinate pregnant women from the 27th week of gestation to prevent pertussis among newborns and infants

The Dominican Republic initiated vaccination against diphtheria, tetanus and acellular pertussis of pregnant women starting the 27th week of gestation in 17 of the 40 provinces of the country, with the main objective of reducing pertussis cases among newborns and infants. This measure has been intended to benefit 20,086 pregnant women from October to December 2019. The decision to initiate vaccination in these provinces is given as part of the interventions carried out in response to the pertussis outbreak observed since 2018.



Introduction of vaccination with the Tdap vaccine among pregnant women. Source: EPI, Ministry of Public Health, Dominican Republic.

According to the data notified to the surveillance system, 147 probable cases were reported vs 47 reported in 2017. Fifty-nine percent of the cases reported among children under one year old occurred in infants 2 months of age or younger. The lethality observed was 2.72% (4/147).

Currently, from epidemiological week 1 to 44 of 2019, 118 cases of pertussis have been reported vs. 119 cases reported in the previous year for the same period. Three deaths have been registered, for a lethality of 2.54% (3/118). The highest number of cases is observed in the province of Santo Domingo, followed by San Cristóbal and the National District. Regarding the rate, San Cristóbal reached the highest lethality rate, 3.17/100,000 habitants, followed by Peravia with 2.55/100,000 habitants.



Prior to the start of vaccination, 19 training workshops were conducted for 795 health workers (collective health 112 and health institutions 683) with profiles of: EPI managers, those responsible for vaccination services, general practitioners, obstetricians, pediatricians, nurses and health promoters. It is expected that this measure will contribute to the reduction of cases of pertussis among newborns and infants.



Training workshops to introduce the Tdap vaccine among pregnant women.
Source: EPI, Ministry of Public Health, Dominican Republic.

First Consultation for the Development of the New Information System for Epidemiological Surveillance of Vaccine-preventable Diseases

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Location	Washington, DC., U.S.A.
Dates	10-11 December 2019
Participants	Twenty participants representing fourteen countries of the Region and the Caribbean Subregion: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, and Peru.
Purpose	The objective of the first consultation for the development of the new information system for epidemiological surveillance of vaccine-preventable diseases was to define, analyze and document the main requirements for the development of a web-based EPV surveillance system.

All countries in the Americas carry out epidemiological surveillance of vaccine-preventable diseases (VPDs), and PAHO's Comprehensive Family Immunization Unit (FPL/IM) collects information on epidemiological surveillance for VPDs in 21 countries and the Caribbean subregion.

On 10-11 December 2019, the first consultation was carried out to learn the current state of information systems for epidemiological surveillance for fourteen countries of the Region, and the requirements to implement a web-based surveillance system for VPDs.

After standardized presentations from each country, participants described data flows for VPD epidemiological surveillance in their countries. They also contributed to three



Consultation to improve PAHO's information system for VPD epidemiological surveillance. Credit: PAHO/WHO.



working groups that discussed the following: 1) characteristics of an information system for ideal epidemiological surveillance; 2) variables that are used in their countries for measles and; 3) variables that are used in their countries for acute flaccid paralysis. After this, they defined some possible reports that they would like the new information system for epidemiological surveillance to have.

This consultation workshop was the first one organized by PAHO, however, it is necessary to continue collecting information so that the new information system for epidemiological surveillance responds to the information needs of countries and regional and global levels.

Preliminary conclusions of the first consultation for the development of the new information system for epidemiological surveillance of VPDs were: 1) consider the characteristics of the current ISIS information system, which have been useful in the last decade; 2) note the importance of continuing to update the information system to have better data availability and better data quality; 3) continue consulting with countries to build a strong information system that facilitates sending and collecting data, to have quality analysis and better decisions.