

Vaccinating pregnant women – a global perspective

The World Health Organization (WHO) influenza vaccine policy recommendations aim to protect vulnerable high-risk groups from severe disease. In a 2012 update of its influenza vaccine position, WHO recommended that countries considering the initiation or expansion of programmes for seasonal influenza vaccination should prioritize pregnant women. This position was based on disease burden evidence available, the safety profile and effectiveness of seasonal influenza vaccine, and the operational feasibility of maternal immunization in low- and middle-income countries.



Since 2012, there have been many advances in the field of maternal influenza immunization. Still, many countries, mostly with low or middle income, have not yet introduced maternal immunization into their national immunization programs. Generally, low-resource countries have multiple competing public health priorities and limited resources. Additional data regarding the incidence of severe influenza disease in pregnant women and young children and the anticipated impact of maternal influenza immunization, may be necessary to demonstrate the value proposition of maternal influenza immunization in countries considering influenza vaccine policies.

Based on these information needs, WHO is developing technical guidance to support the introduction of maternal influenza immunization and to inform concepts of maternal immunization with other vaccines that may benefit pregnant women and their offspring.

To help assess the vaccine's impact, WHO has called an expert group to evaluate influenza morbidity and the vaccines effectiveness in pregnant women, children