Rotavirus Vaccinating in Africa
Ghana Case Study

GE Armah
Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research
ROTA Council
Eleven African countries approved by Gavi for future rotavirus vaccine introduction support (as of June 1, 2014).

As of January 2015, five of those countries have introduced. (Mauritania, Senegal, Niger, Kenya, Eritrea)
Outline

• Pre-vaccine introduction
• Vaccine introduction
• Outcomes
• Lessons learned
Pre-vaccine introduction


Objectives:

- Generation of epidemiology data on rotavirus infection
- Laboratory based
- Workshops for testing for rotaviruses
- Genotyping of identified strains
First set of rotavirus data from Africa:
Infection in Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Assay</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Age (yrs)</th>
<th>% +ve</th>
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African Rotavirus Surveillance Network

Objectives:

Burden of Disease

- Number of diarrhoea hospitalizations
- Proportion of diarrhoea hospitalizations attributable to rotavirus
- Age specific diarrhoea hospitalizations attributable to rotaviruses
- Duration of hospitalization for rotavirus associated diarrhoea
- Strain surveillance
  - Circulating strains
  - New reassortant

Burden of disease
Regional reference labs

> Epidemiology of rotavirus
> VP7 characterisation
Distribution of rotavirus G and P genotypes among children <5 years of age in Ghana (2007 to 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>P- Type</th>
<th>G1</th>
<th>G2</th>
<th>G3</th>
<th>G4</th>
<th>G8</th>
<th>G9</th>
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<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2</td>
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Distribution of rotavirus G and P genotypes among children <5 years of age in Ghana (2007 to 2010)
Key milestones in Ghana’s vaccine introduction planning process, 2010–2012
National decision making

• **Key information**
  • Information about the disease
  • Disease burden
  • WHO recommendations about the vaccine
  • Characteristics of the current available vaccines
  • Vaccine efficacy
  • Vaccine safety
  • Vaccine supply
  • Cost effectiveness
  • Vaccine cost and financial sustainability
  • Other interventions for the disease
Key milestones in Ghana’s vaccine introduction planning process, 2010–2012

- Jan 2012: GHS Sub-committees launched
- 2/15/2012: Materials Development Workshop
- 3/15/2012: Regional Trainings
- 4/14/2012: Advance Press Briefing
- 2/12/2012: KAPB Study Conducted
- 3/6/2012: EPI Review Conducted
- 4/1/2012: Pilot Introduction
- Jan 2012: GHS Sub-committees launched
- Apr 2011: Response to GAVI Conditionalities
- Jul 2011: GAVI Decision Letter
- Jan 2012: GHS Sub-committees launched
- Oct 2010: GAVI Conditional Approval
- Apr 2011: Revised Introduction Plan Submitted
- Aug 2011: GAVI Notification of Vaccine Availability
- Apr 2012: Launch Ceremony
Planning process

• Setting up and launching of planning communities:
  • Cold chain and logistics
  • Training
    • Preparation of manuals and training materials
    • Training of pediatricians, nurses, community health workers
    • Nurses
  • Data management
  • Advocacy and communication
    • Policymaker
    • Parliament
    • Budget office
    • Public
  • Vaccine and waste management
  • Monitoring
    • Implementation/operational issues
    • Adverse events
    • Vaccine effectiveness
Training

• Study on Knowledge, Attitudes Practices and Beliefs (KAPB) amongst health care workers and the general population

• Results from this study used to guide the development of:
  • Communication materials
  • Training manual and materials

• Results guided the conduction of a national materials development workshop to:
  • Develop key training and communication materials

• Conduct of regional training workshop for training of trainers. The press were also invited to these workshops.
Outcomes
Outcomes

(A) Timing of dose 1, in weeks of age

(B) Timing of dose 2, in weeks of age
Safety monitoring: Intussusception surveillance
Lessons Learned (1): New vaccine and perceptions

• Linking of the introduction of rotavirus vaccine as a tool to help country achieve the MDGs goals facilitated the broad acceptance by both health care workers and the general public.

• The widespread understanding of the impact of diarrhea on children appeared to have played an important role in allaying concerns among parents about the administration of the additional vaccines to their children.

• The avoidable burden of disease among children from vaccination was perceived by health care providers as a worthwhile trade-off for the additional workload associated with administering a new vaccine.
Lessons Learned (2): Political and institutional will

- Establishing the planning sub-committees and the marshaling of intersectoral resources, made possible by political and institutional will, through the GHS and the Interagency Coordinating Committee (ICC) facilitated the successful introduction of the new vaccines.

- The intersectoral collaboration and planning that was instituted through the eight planning sub-committees within GHS provided both the EPI and GHS with a far broader base of technical support and resources than they would have been able to marshal from directly within the ranks of GHS employees.

- The institutional will established by GHS and the ICC, additionally enhanced the establishment of effective structures and roles within the introduction planning process and immunization program bolstering the ability of the EPI programme to manage the planning and introduction processes.
Lessons Learned (3): Link between communication activities and introduction

• The essential link between research, knowledge, attitudes, and practices, especially at the community level, early in the process, and the tailoring of messages that were relevant and appropriate to the audience was an essential element of Ghana’s success.

• Parents responded positively to accepting the vaccines as long as they understood the value and importance the diseases they were being invited to be partners in its prevention and their efforts and roles were recognized.

• Formally including partners at all levels—national and local government; international organizations such as Gavi, UNICEF, and WHO; civil society organizations; and community leaders in the team—strengthened the planning process and introduction plans and helped generate a broad coalition of champions for the successful introduction of the rotavirus vaccine in Ghana.