

Recognizing the heavy burden of pneumococcal disease, occurring in young children, and the safety and efficacy of PCV in this age group, WHO recommends the inclusion of PCVs in childhood immunization programmes worldwide. In particular, countries with childhood mortality rate of >50 deaths/1000 births should make the introduction of PCV a high priority.

Since Pneumococcal diseases are responsible for considerable proportion of morbidity and mortality among under five years children in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, introduction of pneumococcal vaccine and achieving high vaccination coverage is an important tool towards achieving the Millennium Development Goal number 4 (MDG4). Accelerating the introduction of the vaccine in the countries in the region is deemed necessary.

By May 2012 PCV has been introduced in nine countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, which account for only 12.3% of the annual births in the Region. The average regional coverage of PCVs was 5% in 2010.

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