Lebanon, 11 December - A joint WHO, European CDC and EPIET mission was organized in LebanonWHO mission at the Dalhamieh informal settlement, Zahle, Bekaa valley. between 2 December and 11 December 2014, to explore best strategies of vaccination against hepatitis A, in view of the repeated outbreaks of hepatitis A across the country over the past two years.

The mission team was able to compile and analyse the available information (incidence of hepatitis A, patterns of the outbreaks among age groups and geographical locations, population coverage of hepatitis A vaccination), meet with the key stakeholders to discuss related issues, and conduct a few field visits to better understand risks of infection.

Preliminary recommendations included to carry out nation-wide catch-up vaccination of all children between 18 months to 3 years and to include Hepatitis A vaccination into the routine childhood vaccination.

Depending on funds availability, the age bracket of catch-up vaccination can be extended to older children. The mission team also recommended further promoting continuous and vigilant hand hygiene practices and reinforcing water and sanitation access and water quality monitoring, especially in the informal tented settlements spread across the country.

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