

Current Health Event

Measles Jan-Jul 2014

The national measles outbreak that hit Lebanon in 2013 is still occurring in 2014, with 220 confirmed cases till the 31st July.

Editorial note:

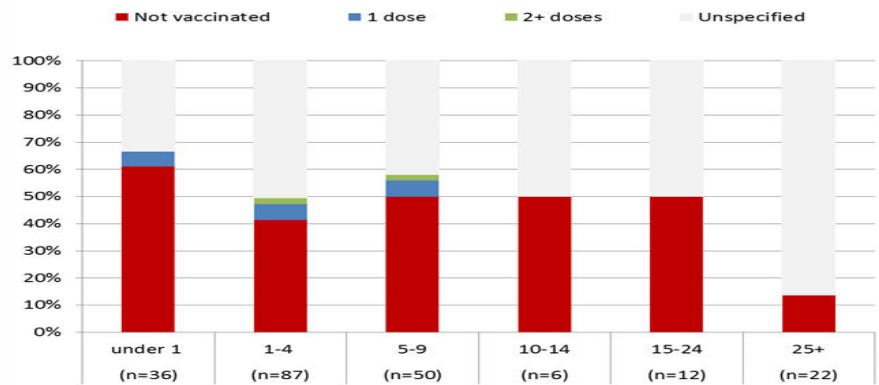
The majority of cases were clinically diagnosed, 44% were laboratory confirmed, and 5% were epidemiologically linked. 48% of the cases were Lebanese, and 42% Syrian. The national attack rate is 3.9 per 100,000 inhabitants. Age specific attack rate is highest among under 5 years (20/100,000) and 5-9 years (7.6/100,000). No measles related-deaths occurred.

Approximately 43% of all the cases were not vaccinated against measles, 4% were vaccinated with one dose of a measles containing vaccine (MCV), 1% with two doses. 50% had unspecified vaccination status.

Among cases with unspecified vaccination status, 17 were reachable, but did not have detailed information related to vaccination status. Contacting cases to verify information remains challenging for several reasons: incorrect or missing phone numbers, missing vaccination card, and unspecified vaccination date or vaccine type.

In April 2014, a national campaign for measles was launched using MR vaccine, targeting children from 9 months to 18 years. The coverage of

Fig. 1: Measles cases by vaccination status by age group, Lebanon, 1st Jan—31st Jul 2014



Source: Ministry of Public Health, Lebanon (for 2014: annualized rate)

of the campaign was estimated to 79.7%.

In response to the occurrence of measles outbreak, the MOPH with the support of WHO and Unicef is working on enhancing measles vaccine coverage by conducting measles campaigns for children, in addition to strengthening the routine immunization program.

Measles is a highly contagious viral disease, which affects mostly children. In malnourished children and people with reduced immunity, measles can cause serious complications, including blindness, encephalitis, severe diarrhoea, ear infection and pneumonia.

Measles vaccine in the national vaccination calendar (MOPH circular no.18 dated on the 26th March 2014):

- 1 measles dose at 9 months
- 1 MMR dose at 15 months
- 1 MMR dose at 18 months

Cumulative Notifiable diseases in Lebanon (Syrian)

Disease	2013 Cumul	2014 Cumul*	Jul	Aug
Vaccine Preventable Diseases				
Polio	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Acute Flaccid Paralysis	34(7)	18(7)	0(0)	0(0)
Measles	1760(232)	219(92)	10(9)	0(0)
Mumps	14(2)	295(45)	12(6)	0(0)
Pertussis	59(9)	47(16)	5(2)	0(0)
Rabies	1(1)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Rubella	27(1)	11(6)	0(0)	0(0)
Tetanus	4(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Viral Hep B	141(8)	124(18)	8(4)	0(0)
Water/Food Borne Diseases				
Brucellosis	189(12)	146(20)	17(1)	0(0)
Cholera	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Hydatid cyst	13(3)	11(1)	1(0)	0(0)
Typhoid Fever	407(21)	105(7)	5(0)	0(0)
Viral Hep A	1551(220)	746(127)	50(7)	0(0)
Other Diseases				
Leishmaniasis	1033(1032)	390(387)	28(28)	0(0)
Meningitis	204(24)	113(13)	6(2)	0(0)
Viral Hep C	103(4)	53(1)	11(0)	2(0)

Source: Ministry of Public Health, Lebanon * to date