

20 November 2019 – Pakistan has become the first country to introduce the World Health Organization recommended typhoid conjugate vaccine (TCV) into its routine immunization schedule.

The government of Pakistan launched the vaccine introduction with a campaign in Sindh Province, which is the centre of an ongoing extensively drug-resistant (XDR) typhoid outbreak that began in November 2016.

Typhoid is a serious illness caused by *Salmonella Typhi*, and is spread through contaminated food and water. In 2017, 63% of typhoid cases and 70% of typhoid deaths in Pakistan were among children younger than 15 years of age.

The two week campaign in Sindh aims to reach more than 10 million children aged nine months to 15 years old.

WHO is working closely with the government of Pakistan and partners UNICEF and GAVI to ensure the highest quality campaign.

More than 8000 skilled and trained vaccinators are involved, in addition to around 8000 people assisting teams in registration. Two social mobilisers per team will visit households to mobilize the caregivers and their children to the vaccination sites at Health facilities or outreach sites in the nearby communities.

The entire community was mobilized ahead of the campaign, including community and religious leaders, local authorities and the education department to ensure parents of children aged nine months to 15 years of age are well informed.

WHO has monitored campaign readiness using WHO assessment tools at provincial, district and Union Council level every two weeks leading into the campaign, including ensuring microplans were updated and validated.

WHO Pakistan representative Dr Palitha Mahipala said teams are using mobile technology to collect administrative coverage data at the health facility and to monitor the campaign.

"We have been able to monitor the campaign through real time reporting using a mobile phone application that enables teams to quickly address issues that may arise during the campaign," he said.

The vaccine, which is the first typhoid vaccine that can be given to children as young as 6 months of age and confers longer term protection against typhoid, will be introduced into the routine vaccination programme across other provinces in a phased manner.

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