



News digest 41
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Dear partners, friends, and colleagues:

The following is a summary of recent, current, and upcoming activities at the Meningitis Vaccine Project (MVP). We welcome your comments and suggestions at info@meningvax.org and encourage you to forward this update to friends or colleagues who might be interested in learning about MVP's progress.

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Vaccine introduction and communication activities

- Preparations at the global, national, regional, and local levels are ongoing for the continued rollout of MenAfriVac® in Ethiopia, Mauritania, and Nigeria (October); Togo (November); and Côte d'Ivoire (December). Guinea is also keen on introducing Serum Institute of India Ltd.'s MenAfriVac vaccine as soon as possible; this is the only country under enhanced disease surveillance where meningitis A cases have been notified during the past epidemic season. For the time being, however, the vaccination campaign in Guinea has been postponed due to the ongoing Ebola virus disease outbreak in the country.
- South Sudan has decided to postpone the MenAfriVac campaign to early 2015 due to the tense political situation in the country.
- In all, more than 50 million people are expected to receive one dose of MenAfriVac between October 14 and December 31, 2014, bringing the total number of people vaccinated to more than 200 million since vaccine launch in 2010.
- Representatives from the World Health Organization (WHO) Intercountry Support Team (IST) in Burkina Faso conducted a follow-up visit in Mauritania on September 2–4 to advocate for the distribution of MenAfriVac in a controlled temperature chain (CTC). Maintaining the cold chain is a longstanding challenge in remote, hard-to-reach areas in sub-Saharan Africa. Two districts will benefit from the new distribution approach that allows the vaccine to be kept outside of the traditional 2°–8°C temperature range, for up to four days at up to 40°C. In 2012, the CTC approach was [successfully piloted](#) in Banikoara, a rural district in northern Benin.
- The MVP team is preparing the documentation on vaccine roll-out, impact, and infant clinical trials results that will be presented at the Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization (SAGE) meeting at WHO/HQ on October 21–23.

Regulatory activities

- Indian regulatory authorities and the WHO prequalification team are reviewing the pediatric licence variation dossier. The license variation will make it possible to integrate MenAfriVac into routine vaccination schedules, providing countries with sustainable strategies to protect new birth cohorts and maintain population protection against meningitis A disease.

Surveillance and epidemic preparedness activities

- The 19 countries with an enhanced disease surveillance system notified 15,707 meningitis cases at week 35, 2014. *Streptococcus pneumoniae* is the main causal germ.

Clinical activities

- The [seven clinical trials](#) related to licensing and prequalification of MenAfriVac for use in 1- to 29-year olds and/or infants have been successfully completed.
- On 9 September, an international scientific meeting was held in Bamako, Mali, to discuss the results of the [PsA-TT-007](#) study and the [persistence study](#), both conducted at the Center for Vaccine Development-Mali (CVD-Mali). Meeting participants included representatives from the Malian Ministry of Health, the WHO country office, local ethic committees, Gabriel Touré

University Hospital pediatricians, community health associations, the entire CVD-Mali team, the MVP team, and project partners.

- On 10 September, the MVP team and partners joined Prof. Samba Sow, the Principal Investigator at CVD-Mali, in thanking the community for their support and participation in the five clinical studies that have been conducted at the site since 2006. The studies tested the safety and efficacy of the vaccine as well as the duration of the protection against disease. Prof. Sow and his team presented the results of PsA-TT-007 to the attending community and discussed future plans for introducing the vaccine into routine vaccination programs and the importance of completing the mass campaigns in all meningitis belt countries. Community senior representatives expressed their thanks to the CVD-Mali research team, MVP, and all partners; they also shared their views on the value of life-saving vaccines to protect their communities from deadly and devastating diseases such as meningitis.



Photos: Geoff Ward/Film & Photography

Project closure

- The MVP team is preparing for the project's closure on December 31, 2014. Closure activities are focusing on archiving and closing or transferring responsibilities to a range of collaborators and partners.

Preparing the after MVP

- The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is reviewing the proposals that PATH and WHO submitted in parallel for a post-MVP transition period of three years. Both proposals aim to sustain the achievements of the MVP in the near and far future.

Celebrating success

- Due to the ongoing Ebola virus disease outbreak affecting some countries in West Africa, a decision has been taken to postpone the African Ministerial Conference on Immunization and the MVP's project closure meeting "Ending and New Beginnings" that were scheduled to take place in Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia, on December 3–5, 2014. These meetings are now likely to take place during the first trimester of 2015.

That's all for now from the MVP team. We look forward to receiving your comments at info@meningvax.org.

Created in 2001, the Meningitis Vaccine Project is a partnership between WHO and PATH. The mission of MVP is to eliminate epidemic meningitis as a public health problem in sub-Saharan Africa through the development, testing, introduction, and widespread use of conjugate meningococcal vaccines.

For more information on MVP, please visit our website at <http://www.meningvax.org>.