

What works to improve vaccination rates



Every year, 1.5 million people lose their lives to diseases that could have been prevented by vaccination. Now, Covid-19 is causing further disruption to immunisation services across the world, placing 80 million children at further risk of diseases that could have been prevented.

This executive summary and its associated full briefing document aim to support global policy makers to prioritise the most effective activities to increase vaccination rates and save lives.

1. Remove the practical barriers to vaccination and build resilient immunisation systems

- Worldwide, two-thirds of the children missing out on vaccines are those living below the poverty line or in fragile and humanitarian settings where vaccination and other fundamental health services are not available or are difficult to access.
- Even in areas where vaccines are available, practical barriers are still stopping people from getting vaccinated. Key challenges include vaccine stock-outs, the distances to health centres, limited opening hours, or inconvenient booking systems.
- Simple solutions can have a huge impact. For example, phone call reminders can increase attendance at vaccination appointments by 18.4%.
- In all settings, reducing the practical barriers that communities face and ensuring resilience in the face of crisis must be the first priority.

2. Change the way we talk about 'vaccine hesitancy'

- Inconsistent use of the term 'vaccine hesitancy' risks overemphasising the importance of the role vaccine confidence plays in vaccine uptake and distracts from larger issues such as access to immunisation.

- The active refusal of vaccines is just 1-2% in high income countries and globally, 92% of people agree that vaccines are important.
- Trying to change the views of those who are sceptical about vaccines is difficult to achieve and, even where it is possible to change perceptions, this does not guarantee that people take the next step and get vaccinated.
- Any efforts to tackle misinformation should focus on amplifying positive and accurate content about vaccines and building resilience to incorrect or harmful content, whilst avoiding tactics such as myth-busting that can cause more harm than good.

3. Strengthen the voices of healthcare workers and other influential community members in presenting vaccination as a social norm

- People tend to do what they think is common, so it's important to reinforce the message that vaccination is one of the most widely accepted health activities worldwide.
- One of the most powerful and trustworthy voices for increasing vaccine uptake are healthcare workers.
- We must make sure that people speaking about vaccines have the latest evidence-based tools and guidance to feel confident in presenting vaccination as a social norm.

4. Address the research gap

- Most available research is reliant on evidence from high income settings
- To improve vaccination rates in all countries, research must be people-centred and conducted in a range of settings, especially in low- and middle-income countries.
- Research needs to focus on what interventions really work to increase vaccination in a wide range of different contexts and why.

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