

Communication strategies to support the introduction and promote uptake of Rotavirus vaccine in Benin

Assanatou Bamogo, Chloe Manchester, Brian Castro, Sola Kambamba, Michel Othepa, Andre Tonda, and Mary-Carol Jennings

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health-International Vaccine Access Center, Rotavirus Accelerated Vaccine Introduction Network, John Snow Inc, Ministry of Health-National Immunization Agency (Benin).

Background

Vaccination communication has contributed significantly to develop a sustainable demand for vaccination services and improved vaccine coverage. In their effort to introduce the Rotavirus vaccine in their national immunization program, Benin intends to develop a country specific communication material that will consider their cultural context. In this study, we aim to determine factors and interventions strategies that will promote the Rotavirus vaccine uptake.

Method

We used a qualitative approach and conducted the study in the four geographical areas of southern Benin, one urban, two peri-urban, and one rural: Cotonou, Abomey-Calavi, Sô-Av, and Tori respectively. Communication interventions was identified through interviews and focus group discussions carried out among selected stakeholders involved in vaccination, vaccine communication in health system and services. Relevant and existing documents were also reviewed, and data generated were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using a thematic approach.

Results

The identified barriers and facilitators were organized and grouped into health systems and community level factors. Health system factors identified by participants included limited funding, health workers capacity (training and skills), lack of humanized care and vaccine delivery, inadequate infrastructures and equipment. At the community level, parents, caregivers', and community stakeholders' attitude were identified. However, Vaccination campaign, door to door vaccination was a preferred method of delivery described by mothers and caregivers. Political support, engagement of local elected officials and health center leaders were classified to develop and improve demand generation. Tailored communication materials and training were developed to support the vaccine introduction and uptake.

Conclusion

The identification and development of Benin Rotavirus vaccine communication interventions plan could assist program managers to build tailored communication materials. This approach can be used to identify gaps in vaccination communication, to improve vaccines perception and coverage in Benin and similar environment.