



Health Effects of Covid-19 Related Immunisation Disruptions

For Prelims: [Covid-19 pandemic](#), [Measles](#), [Rubella](#), [HPV \(Human Papillomavirus\)](#), [Hepatitis B](#), [Diphtheria](#), [Tetanus](#), and [Pertussis \(DTP\) vaccine](#).

For Mains: Health effects of Covid-19 Related Immunization Disruptions, Government Policies & Interventions.

[Source: DTE](#)

Why in News?

Recently, a new paper has been published in the journal **The Lancet Global Health** titled- ***Estimating the Health Effects of Covid-19-Related Immunization Disruptions in 112 Countries During 2020-30: A Modelling Study***, which highlights that **Global immunization declined during the Covid-19 pandemic**, increasing disease burden and outbreak risk.

What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

- **Global Immunisation Decline:**
 - The Covid-19 pandemic led to a decline in global immunisation coverage, which increased **disease burden and outbreak risks** across various countries.
 - It is estimated that disruptions to [Measles](#), [Rubella](#), [HPV \(Human Papillomavirus\)](#), [Hepatitis B](#), meningitis A, and **yellow fever vaccination** could lead to approximately **49,119 additional deaths during the calendar years 2020-2030**, with measles being the main contributor to this increase in mortality.
 - For the years 2020-2030, disruptions in vaccination coverage across all **14 pathogens could result in a 2.66% reduction** in the long-term effect, translating to a decrease in the number of deaths **averted from 37,378,194 to 36,410,559**.
- **Importance of Catch-Up Vaccines:**
 - The importance of **catch-up vaccines** is emphasised, particularly **for diseases like measles and yellow fever**, which experienced an immediate increase in burden post-pandemic.
 - Catch-up activities were found to be **effective in averting excess deaths**, with the potential to **prevent approximately 79% of excess deaths** related to measles, rubella, HPV, hepatitis B, and yellow fever.
- **Impact on DTP Vaccine Coverage:**
 - The pandemic impacted **coverage for the [Diphtheria](#), [Tetanus](#), and [Pertussis \(DTP\) vaccines](#)**, resulting in an additional 6 million children missing out on vaccination in 2021 globally.
- **Resurgence of Measles Cases:**
 - There has been a resurgence of measles cases reported in several countries, including

those where measles was previously considered eradicated, such as the **United Kingdom and the United States**.

- In 2021, nearly 61 million measles vaccine doses were postponed or missed due to Covid-19-related delays in immunisation campaigns in 18 countries.
- Furthermore, in 2022, there was an increase in **measles cases and deaths globally compared to 2021 levels**, with millions of children missing their vaccine doses, particularly in countries like **Nigeria, Pakistan, and India**.

▪ **Recommendations:**

- **Effectiveness of Catch-Up Activities:** The study suggested that implementing catch-up vaccination activities could potentially avert 78.9% of excess deaths between calendar years 2023 and 2030.
 - This means that proactive catch-up efforts have the potential to **significantly mitigate the adverse impacts** of vaccine-coverage disruptions.
- **Importance of Timing and Targeting of Catch-Up Activities:** It is important for timely implementation of **catch-up vaccination activities**, tailored to specific cohorts and regions most affected by disruptions.
 - This targeted approach can help improve vaccine coverage and mitigate the adverse effects of under-immunization.
- **Significance of Continued Immunisation Efforts:** Continued importance of sustained immunization efforts, particularly for vaccines like HPV is important, which play a crucial role in preventing cervical cancer.
 - This underscores the necessity of ongoing vaccination campaigns even amidst disruptions to ensure long-term public health benefits.

What are the Major Initiatives Related to Immunisation?

▪ **Global:**

- [Immunisation Agenda 2030 \(IA2030\)](#): It sets an ambitious, overarching global vision and strategy for vaccines and immunisation for the decade 2021–2030.
 - By the end of the decade, IA2030 aims to:
 - Reduce by 50% the number of children receiving zero vaccine doses
 - Achieve 500 introductions of new or under-utilised vaccines in low- and middle-income countries
 - Achieve 90% coverage for essential childhood vaccines
- [World Immunisation Week](#): It is celebrated every year in the last week of April.
- [Big Catch-Up Initiative](#): It was launched by the **WHO, UNICEF, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation** along with [Immunization Agenda 2030](#) and many other global and national health partners, a targeted global effort **to boost vaccination among children following declines driven by the Covid-19 pandemic**.

▪ **Indian:**

- **Universal Immunization Programme (UIP):**
 - The program provides free immunization against 12 vaccine-preventable diseases.
 - **Nationally Against 9 Diseases:** Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Polio, Measles, Rubella, severe form of Childhood Tuberculosis, Hepatitis B and Meningitis & Pneumonia caused by Haemophilus influenzae type B
 - **Sub-nationally Against 3 Diseases:** Rotavirus diarrhoea, Pneumococcal Pneumonia and Japanese Encephalitis
 - Two major milestones of the UIP have been the [eradication of polio](#) in 2014 and the **elimination of maternal and neonatal tetanus in 2015**.
- **Mission Indradhanush:**
 - [Mission Indradhanush \(MI\)](#) was launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW) in 2014 **to vaccinate all unvaccinated and partially vaccinated children under UIP**.
 - It is being implemented in several phases.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims:

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Adenoviruses have single-stranded DNA genomes whereas retroviruses have double-stranded DNA genomes.
2. Common cold is sometimes caused by an adenovirus whereas AIDS is caused by a retrovirus.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (b)

Mains:

Q. Critically examine the role of WHO in providing global health security during the Covid-19 pandemic. **(2020)**

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