

# Standard operating procedures for surveillance of meningitis preparedness and response to epidemics in Africa



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Designed by TIP Unit, Brazzaville, Republic of Congo



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#### FOREWORD

This second edition of the WHO-AFRO Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Surveillance of Meningitis, Preparedness and Response to Meningitis Epidemics in Africa has incorporated the SOPs for Enhanced and Case-based Surveillance (both versions dated January 2017).

All countries in the African meningitis belt undertake enhanced surveillance (ES) for meningitis. Following the introduction in 2010 of MenAfriVac<sup>®</sup>, a serogroup A meningococcal conjugate vaccine, some countries or parts of countries (for example Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Togo, Chad) have also introduced Case-based surveillance (CBS). The principal aim of ES is to strengthen outbreak detection across the meningitis belt to initiate a rapid response to meningitis epidemics. The principal aim of CBS is to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of new vaccines against bacterial meningitis. Both monitor the epidemiology of meningitis due to meningococcal serogroups and other bacterial pathogens.

Separate SOPs were developed for the two surveillance strategies. However, since those countries and parts of countries implementing CBS must also continue ES, a request from countries was that the two SOPs should be merged into one document to facilitate implementation and training.

CBS was introduced in selected countries of the Belt to evaluate MenAfriVac<sup>©</sup> vaccine and should be continued where possible in countries with high surveillance performance if resources permit. This will also allow to evaluate future new vaccines. The main distinguishing feature of CBS is that epidemiological and microbiological data are collected and linked for each case of meningitis, with reporting and analysis at individual case level, whereas ES relies on timely reporting and analysis of aggregate data by week to prepare for and respond promptly to epidemics. CBS does not necessarily cover all districts in all countries and is not designed for timely detection of an epidemic or for launching a rapid response; therefore, it does not replace the need for universal ES. It is not intended that all countries should adopt CBS but that they should consider introduction into all or selected districts as and when resources allow this to happen.

The aim of these SOPs in Africa is to guide health personnel from various levels of the health system in the implementation of enhanced, and where relevant, case-based surveillance of meningitis.

Finally, we invite healthcare stakeholders at all levels to adopt this document for effective conduct of meningitis surveillance, epidemic preparedness and response activities.



### ACRONYMS

AFP	Acute flaccid paralysis
ATB	Antibiogram
CBS	Case-based surveillance
CC	Collaborating Centre
CMYP	Comprehensive multi-year plans
CSF	Cerebrospinal Fluid
DH	District Hospital
DHMT	District Health Management Team
DMO	District Medical Officer
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic acid
DPC	Disease Prevention and Control
EPI	Expanded Program on Immunization
EPR	Epidemic Preparedness and Response
ES	Enhanced Surveillance
GND	Gram negative diplococcus
GPB	Gram-Positive Bacillus
GPD	Gram positive diplococcus
HF	Health Facility
Hib	Haemophilus influenzae type b
ICG	International Coordinating Group
IDSR	Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response
IM	Intra-muscular
IST	Intercountry Support Team for West Africa, WHO
IV	Intravenous
LP	Lumbar Puncture
MenAfriVac <sup>©</sup>	Serogroup A meningococcal conjugate vaccine
MGG	May-Grümwald Giemsa

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