

HEALTH EVIDENCE NETWORK SYNTHESIS REPORT 53

A review of evidence on equitable delivery, access and utilization of immunization services for migrants and refugees in the WHO European Region

Elisabetta De Vito | Paolo Parente | Chiara de Waure | Andrea Poscia | Walter Ricciardi



The Health Evidence Network

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The Migration and Health programme, formerly known as Public Health Aspects of Migrants in Europe (PHAME), was established in 2011 to support its Member States to strengthen the health sector's capacity to provide evidence-informed responses to the public health challenges of refugee and migrant health. The programme operates under the umbrella of the European health policy framework Health 2020. The programme provides support to Member States under four pillars: technical assistance; health information, research and training; partnership building; and advocacy and communication. The programme promotes a collaborative intercountry approach to migrant health by facilitating cross-country policy dialogue and encouraging homogeneous health interventions along the migration routes to promote the health of migrants and refugees and protect the public health of the host community.

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The VPI programme supports Member States in designing and implementing evidence-informed operational research and interventions, assessing the burden of disease and monitoring progress towards disease reduction and elimination/eradication goals. The VPI programme also develops norms and standards, provides normative guidance to countries to implement effective vaccine-preventable disease control programmes and advocates for political commitment towards elimination and eradication goals.

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Abstract

This review focuses on existing immunization policies and practices for migrants and refugees and provides an overview of barriers and facilitators for access to and utilization of immunization services. Evidence was obtained by a scoping review of academic and grey literature in English and a further 11 languages and included official documents available from the websites of ministries of health and national health institutes of the WHO European Region Member States. The review highlights that vaccination policies tailored to migrants and refugees are very heterogeneous among WHO European Region Member States. By comparison, common barriers for the implementation and utilization of immunization services can be identified across countries. Outlined policy options are intended to strengthen information about immunization for migrants and refugees, support future evidence-informed policy-making, enable the achievement of national vaccination coverage goals and improve the eligibility of migrants and refugees to access culturally competent immunization services.

Keywords

IMMUNIZATION PROGRAMS, IMMUNIZATION, VACCINATION, REFUGEES, TRANSIENTS AND MIGRANTS, COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL, EUROPE

Suggested citation

De Vito E, Parente P, de Waure C, Poscia A, Ricciardi W. A review of evidence on equitable delivery, access and utilization of immunization services for migrants and refugees in the WHO European Region. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe; 2017 (Health Evidence Network (HEN) synthesis report 53).

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Publications

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UN City, Marmorvej 51

DK-2100 Copenhagen Ø, Denmark

Alternatively, complete an online request form for documentation, health information, or for permission to quote or translate, on the Regional Office website (<http://www.euro.who.int/pubrequest>).

ISSN 2227-4316

ISBN 978 92 890 5274 0

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ABBREVIATIONS

HBV	hepatitis B virus
MMR	combined measles–mumps–rubella (vaccine)
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NIP	national immunization programme
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
VPD	vaccine-preventable disease



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