

“When you welcome well, you vaccinate well”

**A qualitative study on
sub-optimal vaccination coverage
in urban settings in Conakry**



Julita Gil Cuesta, Salimou Kaba, Emilie Venables, Kassi Nanan-N'Zeth, Benoit Haba, Catherine Bachy, Isabella Panunzi, Katie Whitehouse

OPERATIONAL RESEARCH DAY, Brussels – 31 May 2019



Background

In urban settings, sub-optimal coverage in measles mass vaccination campaigns (MVC)

3,991 confirmed measles cases in Guinea in 2017:

- MVC: 686,568 children in Conakry
- 95% in the coverage survey:
 - Lack of knowledge reported by half of not vaccinated

Aim: To understand reasons to adapt and improve future vaccination strategies



Methods

- Matam and Matoto communes
- 9 focus group discussions
 - 68 care-givers of children of vaccination age
- 13 key informant interviews
 - health-care workers
 - community leaders
 - Imams
- Purposive sampling

RESULTS

Three main themes:

1. Perceptions of vaccination
2. Knowledge and Trust
3. Community involvement



Perceptions of vaccination

Participants unanimously regarded vaccines **positively**:

“If you get vaccinated, it will be difficult for you to get measles” -28 years, female, caregiver of vaccinated child

The most common concerns were **side-effects** and the **cost** of treating side-effects:

“ Vaccination makes children sick, if you have no means for treatment it will be difficult ” -50 years, female, caregiver of vaccinated child

Knowledge and Trust

Several **requests for further knowledge** were made:

“I would like to know which illness this vaccine is for” -32 years, female, caregiver of vaccinated child

A **lack of trust** in vaccines and health system was identified:

“...mothers do not trust... not all of them dare to bring their child out for vaccination” -25 years, female, caregiver of vaccinated child

“After Ebola, people have doubts, and nobody wants their children to go to the hospital” -39 years, Imam

Community involvement

The critical role of community health-workers (CHW) was highlighted:

Recruiting CHWs from local neighborhoods:

“If they don’t know the neighborhood, how are they going to vaccinate their children?” -23 years, male, caregiver of non-vaccinated child

Improving CHWs’ **knowledge, attitude** and **skills**:

“When they come, they don’t speak politely, thus you can’t leave them your child” -25 years, male, caregiver of non-vaccinated child

Conclusions and Recommendations

MVC coverage could be increased by improving:

- Caregiver **knowledge** of vaccines, potential side effects and their management:
 - Retaining positive vaccine perceptions beyond campaigns
 - Guaranteeing free of charge management of side effects
- Develop **trust** within communities:
 - Recruiting CHW from targeted communities with local language competencies
 - Responding to questions with evidence based information
 - Continue involving key people in bearing positive messages (community and religious leaders)
- **Health education** of CHWs: for improved technical knowledge and “skills” to better communicate during and beyond campaigns

Conclusions

Coverage improved by:

- **Knowledge**
- **Trust**
- **Health education**

Policy & Practice

In MSF vaccination campaigns:

- **Surveillance and management of side effects**
- **Community involvement:** planning; social mobilization; identification and negotiation in difficult areas
 - Strategic paper on Community Engagement 2020-2023
- **Improve health education approach**
 - Optimize health promotion toolkit for vaccination (flipchart, video, etc)
 - Revised training
 - Context analysis before intervention

Advocate with national partners (Agence Nationale de Sécurité Sanitaire, EPI):

- Free of care management of side effects
- Stronger communication strategy on vaccination
- Improvement of routine EPI
- Enhanced community involvement

A group of approximately 15 young children, mostly of African descent, are standing in a line outdoors. They are dressed in casual clothing like t-shirts and tank tops. The background shows trees and a metal structure, possibly a playground. The children have various expressions, some looking towards the camera and others looking away.

Thank you

To all study participants for sharing their invaluable experiences, to the field, coordination and cell teams to make the study possible, and to the support from the local Ministry of Health.