



Media Release
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Don't delay, vaccinate today

The Confederation of Meningitis Organizations (CoMO) today issued a call to action to parents in Asia to immunise their children against pneumococcal disease, to reduce their children's risk of serious illness and preventable death.

The call to action comes on the eve of the 13th Asian Pacific Congress of Pediatrics to be held in China at the Shanghai International Convention Center, which aims to address health issues affecting children in Asia.

Pneumococcal disease is the leading cause of vaccine preventable death worldwide in children younger than five¹. The disease is estimated to claim up to one million deaths in children each year, with half of the top 10 countries with the highest prevalence of pneumococcal disease found in Asia^{2,3}.

In China alone, 30,000 children under the age of five die as a result of pneumococcal disease infection every year⁴. Pneumococcal disease can also cause pneumonia and meningitis, which are two of the most serious conditions a child can suffer from^{5,6}.

Pneumococcal immunisation is critical in protecting children from pneumococcal disease, which refers to a range of illnesses caused by infection with the bacterium streptococcus pneumonia, also known as pneumococcus⁷. The vaccines that help protect against pneumococcal disease have been readily available and widely used globally for over nine years.

"We strongly encourage all parents to immunise their children, as infants are the main carriers of this life-threatening disease," said Mr Bruce Langoulant, CoMO President. "Immunising children against pneumococcal disease can therefore reduce the spread of bacteria to other children," he said.

Pneumococcal disease is picked up through close contact with infected carriers. Most people carry pneumococcal bacteria in their nose and throat. The bacteria are transferred to another person through droplets of saliva or mucus, such as when a carrier sneezes, coughs, shares toys or kisses someone⁷.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has recommended the priority inclusion of the 7-valent pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV7) in national childhood immunisation programs worldwide since 2007. In Asia, PCV7 is currently available on the childhood immunisation program in Hong Kong. While PCV7 is not on childhood immunisation programs in other countries in Asia, it is readily available from doctors.

Parents seeking more information about immunising against pneumococcal disease should speak to their doctor.

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For further information or to arrange an interview with CoMO President, Mr Bruce Langoulant, please contact: Andrea Brady – andreabradyl01@gmail.com or +64 212 545 324.

About CoMO:

The Confederation of Meningitis Organisations (CoMO) was established in 2004 to be a global voice for the organisations and patient groups which continue to be formed to raise awareness about meningitis and septicaemia (blood poisoning) and to ensure support is available for those affected. CoMO is now comprised of 26 meningitis and children's health organisations and 7 individual advocates from around the world and is working to strengthen its network of families and healthcare professionals within the Asia Pacific region. For more information about CoMO, please visit: www.comoonline.org

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