SYNOPSIS: ROTAVIRUS VACCINATION - WHY EUROPE IS MOVING FORWARD?
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The burden of rotavirus gastroenteritis (RVGE) is considerable, impacting clinical practice, imposing costs on health systems, and acting as a source of significant morbidity.\(^1\) Further, this burden is often underestimated.\(^2\)

Vaccines against rotavirus (RV) were developed using some of the most comprehensive studies in vaccinology to date.\(^3\) These live, attenuated oral vaccines were designed to mimic the protection conferred from natural infection\(^2\) and have shown an efficacy higher than 90% in preventing severe cases of RV diarrhoea.\(^4\) The substantial public health impact of RV vaccination has been demonstrated worldwide. Post-licensure effectiveness data from Latin America, the USA and Australia have shown that these vaccines have significantly reduced diarrhoea associated hospitalisations, outpatients and emergency department visits.\(^4,5\) Additionally, recently published data has demonstrated the significant impact that vaccination can have in the European context.\(^6,7\)

Despite the 2008 recommendations from the European Society for Paediatric Infectious Diseases (ESPID) and the European Society for Paediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition (ESPGHAN),\(^8\) RV vaccination coverage in some large European countries remains low.\(^9\) To date, only Austria, Belgium, Finland and Luxembourg have included RV vaccination in their national immunisation programmes.\(^9\) However, the situation in Europe is slowly improving.\(^9\) Recent data on the benefit/risk assessment of rotavirus vaccination from different parts of the world - along with a better understanding of the burden of the disease - contributed to a change in perspective.\(^9,10,11\) The recent decision in 2012 to introduce RV vaccination into the UK schedule may indicate a growing interest in the prevention of RVGE.\(^12\)

This symposium will allow the audience to understand how RV can be prevented and that 6 years after RV vaccine registration, Europe is moving forward.

References:


