



Announcements:

- Visit our new website www.HibAction.org for Hib Initiative and Hib Vaccine information and much more. Please let us know what information would be most valuable to you for this site.
- Sept. '05 The U.K., France, Italy, Spain, and Sweden committed nearly US\$4 billion to the International Finance Facility for immunizations (IFFim) to support and scale up the work of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI).

Updates:

- **Nov. '05** SAGE meeting, Geneva - WHO advisory group discussed strengthening recommendations for Hib vaccine usage. Recommendations to be published in the Weekly Epidemiologic Review.
- **Nov. '05** First country consultations conducted in Burkina Faso, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan.
- **Oct. '05** India probe study, investigators meeting and steering committee.
- **Oct. '05** Hib Documentary aired on BBC World, through a collaboration of the Hib Initiative with PATH, who was the main sponsor.
- **Sep.-Oct. '05** Hib Initiative visits with WHO Regional offices in Europe, Africa, Southeast Asia, Western Pacific and Middle East regions. The objectives of the visits were to introduce the initiative, discuss with staff regional priorities and select key countries for conducting on-site assessment of Hib vaccine issues.
- **June '05** Received award and the Initiative was introduced at a WHO new vaccines retreat, Geneva



the Hib initiative
TAKING ACTION TO PREVENT CHILDHOOD
PNEUMONIA & MENINGITIS www.HibAction.org

"Welcome to the first edition of Hib Focus, the Hib Initiative's newsletter to provide focus on Hib leading to action.

The Hib initiative is a collaboration between the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the World Health organization (WHO), and is funded by the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations (GAVI). The main objective of the initiative is to support GAVI eligible countries to make informed decisions regarding the introduction or sustainability of Hib vaccine programs. The Hib Initiative plans to build on ongoing activities that are relevant to Hib disease in these countries, and to work collaboratively with various partners to achieve its goals. Though this first issue will focus on introducing the initiative, we intend for this quarterly newsletter to provide you with timely updates on the various activities undergone by the Hib Initiative worldwide, in addition to relevant meetings, and announcements. We hope this newsletter will provide you with useful information, and would appreciate any feedback and suggestions for improvements."

Vision: *To reduce risk of childhood death and disability through sustained use of Hib vaccine.*

Mission: *To expedite and sustain evidence-informed decisions at the global, regional and country levels regarding the use of Hib vaccination to prevent childhood meningitis and pneumonia.*

Rana A. Hajjeh, MD, Project Director, The Hib Initiative

What is GAVI?

The Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization was formed to harness the strengths and experience of multiple partners in immunization. It is an historic alliance between the private and public sector committed to the mission of *saving children's lives and protecting people's health through the widespread use of vaccines.*

A new type of public-private partnership, GAVI brings together governments in developing and industrialized countries, established and emerging vaccine manufacturers, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), research institutes, UNICEF, the World Health Organization, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the World Bank.



The Hib Initiative Team

Key Facts about Hib disease and vaccine:

- Hib causes severe pneumonia and meningitis among children younger than 5 years old, worldwide.
- An estimated 3 million cases of Hib serious disease and 400,000 deaths occur annually worldwide.
- Increasing antibiotic resistance makes Hib disease more difficult and costly to treat.
- Hib vaccine has been proven highly safe and effective, and has been used routinely for more than 15 years in industrialized countries.
- The Hib vaccine is under-utilized in developing countries. Various barriers exist against a wider implementation of Hib vaccines in developing countries, including limited awareness about Hib disease, uncertainty about Hib disease burden, and concerns about vaccine cost and financial sustainability.
- Where it has been used in developing countries (e.g., the Gambia), it has virtually eliminated Hib disease.
- Currently, only 21 of 72 GAVI-eligible countries are using or planning to use Hib vaccine by early 2006
- The global community is working hard to support sustainable and affordable supply of Hib vaccine so more children can be protected
- The Hib Initiative aims to support country-level decisions regarding the introduction and sustained use of Hib vaccines.

The Hib Initiative has adopted a collaborative approach that is: country-driven, focuses on informed decision-making, and enables sustainable health system integration. It will focus on work within the following 3 broad groups of countries:

- 1. Countries that have already introduced Hib vaccines:** the Hib Initiative will assist these countries to make evidence-based decisions about the continuation of routine Hib immunization.
- 2. Countries in regions with significant Hib disease burden that have not yet introduced Hib conjugate vaccine:** the Hib Initiative will support country efforts to increase awareness of Hib disease, to communicate existing data about Hib disease, to gather local data about Hib disease if needed, and to evaluate the potential costs and benefits of Hib vaccine introduction. For countries that elect to introduce Hib vaccine, the Hib Initiative will assist with the development of vaccine introduction, financial sustainability plans, and with the GAVI application process.
- 3. Countries in regions with unclear burden of Hib disease:** will support efforts to assemble and evaluate existing data on Hib disease burden. The Hib Initiative will also work with countries and regional organizations to develop regional approaches that will efficiently address uncertainties about Hib disease burden while meeting country needs for evidence.

We are looking forward to working with the many partners in Hib research and immunization. It gives us great hope that together we will bring life saving vaccines to millions of the world's poorest children. We welcome your partnership and support in this endeavor.

The Hib Initiative unites experts from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization to advance evidence-informed decision-making regarding the introduction and use of Hib vaccination in the developing world.

What topics would you like us to address in this newsletter? We appreciate your feedback, questions and/or suggestions.

Please contact: Lois Privor-Dumm lprivord@jhsph.edu or visit our website www.HibAction.org

Editor: Rebecca Boggs