Module 3: Introduction to Vaccine Pharmacovigilance

Vaccine PV Fellowship
WHO Collaborating Centre for Advocacy and Training in Pharmacovigilance
Accra, Ghana
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Learning Outcomes

• At the end of this module, participants are expected to:
  – Know the definition of “vaccine pharmacovigilance”
  – Know the important differences between “pharmacovigilance” and “vaccine pharmacovigilance”
  – Appreciate the need for specialized monitoring of adverse events following immunization especially the public health imperatives
Food for thought

Vaccination programmes suffer from their own successes..... Because serious vaccine-induced injury is rare, there are significant challenges in getting good evidence on case causality studies and the success of mass vaccination makes it difficult to do epidemiological studies with satisfactory controls

What is pharmacovigilance?

- Pharmacovigilance is the science and activities relating to the detection, assessment, understanding and prevention of adverse effects or any other drug-related problem.
  - The importance of pharmacovigilance, WHO, 2002; EU GvP Definition (in line with WHO’s definition)
What is vaccine pharmacovigilance?

• Vaccine pharmacovigilance is defined as the science and activities relating to the detection, assessment, understanding, prevention, and communication of adverse events following immunization, or of any other vaccine- or immunization-related issues.

Goal of Vaccine Pharmacovigilance

Early detection of and appropriate and timely response to AEFI{s in order to minimize negative effects to the health of individuals and lessen the potential negative impact on immunization of the population
Elements to consider in vaccine PV-1

• Vaccines are usually administered to healthy people, including infants
• Vaccines may be administered to the vast majority of the population or of a birth cohort or to groups at high risk for disease complications
• Subpopulations may be more susceptible to experience certain AEFIIs
Elements to consider in vaccine PV- II

• The age at the time of immunization may coincide with the emergence of certain age-related diseases (e.g. neurodevelopmental disorders)

• Immunization with certain vaccines is mandated in some countries

• The benefits of immunization may not be immediately visible, particularly if the target disease incidence is low
Elements to consider in vaccine PV-III

• Due to the low acceptance of risks, intensive investigation of serious AEFIs, even if rare, is necessary

• Non-serious AEFIs may signal a potentially larger problem with the vaccine or immunization, or have an impact on the acceptability of immunization in general
  – They should therefore also be monitored and reported!
Elements to consider in vaccine PV- IV

- Appropriate methods are needed to detect and assess potential causal association of serious, rare, and/or delayed adverse events

- Consideration of dechallenge and rechallenge differs for vaccines compared with other medicinal products
  - Vaccines usually administered only once or with long intervals, and serious AEFIs often prevent further vaccine administration
  - Dechallenge not applicable to vaccines, given their long-term immunological effects
Elements to consider in vaccine PV- V

• Vaccines are often administered concomitantly with other vaccines, making causal attribution to a specific vaccine difficult

• The administration of live vaccines can lead to disease caused by the attenuated organisms in vaccinees or their contacts
  – Should be differentiated from coinciding natural infection
Elements to consider in vaccine PV- VI

• Vaccines are complex biological products, which may include multiple antigens, live organisms, adjuvants, and preservatives
  – Batch information critical for vaccines
  – Each component may have unique safety implications

• New vaccines are increasingly based on new production and administration technologies, with new adjuvants and alternative routes of administration, necessitating adapted safety monitoring systems
Elements to consider in vaccine PV- VII

• Vaccines may elicit herd immunity
  – Critically important when undertaking benefit/risk assessment

• Effective communication regarding safety of vaccines and immunization is challenging
  – Despite strong evidence that a serious adverse event is not related to immunization, perceptions of harm can have a negative impact on immunization
Vaccine PV and Vaccine Regulation

- Vaccine PV is an essential component of vaccine regulation which involves
  - Marketing authorization and licensing
  - Post marketing surveillance (including safety monitoring)
  - System of lot release
  - Laboratory access
  - Regulatory inspections
  - Oversight of clinical trials

11 March 2011
Why is vaccine pharmacovigilance necessary?
Why vaccine safety monitoring?

“First do no harm”
Hippocrates (470 – 360 BC)
Today, many parents and providers have not been exposed to the gruesome impact of 
Vaccine preventable diseases
Vaccines used in NIPs are considered safe and effective.

Adverse events may still occur following vaccination.
- Most adverse events are minor e.g., redness at injection site, fever
- More serious events can occur, although infrequent e.g., seizures, anaphylaxis

Public trust is key to the success of vaccination programmes.
Balancing efficacy and safety of a vaccine

Potential benefits of an effective vaccine must be weighed against potential risk of an AEFI.

Vaccine efficacy: Ability of a vaccine to work as intended to protect from illness.

Vaccine-associated risk: Probability increased adverse event that harm the individuals or population.

Regulatory authorities must establish risk/benefit assessment of the immunization with a vaccine.
Why Vaccine PV?

• Clinical trials of vaccine often involve a limited number of participants
  – The numbers in vaccine clinical trials are typically much higher than in drug clinical trials
• Clinical trial typically (not always) excludes special groups and vulnerable populations
  – Vaccine trial often involves children but excludes pregnant women, the immuno-compromised, those with co-morbid conditions etc
• In real life use, some vaccines may need to be withdrawn due to safety and/or quality concerns or when the benefits/risk ratio is unfavourable (or appears so)
Wyeth-Lederle withdraws RotaShield vaccine - updated story

Wyeth-Lederle says it has voluntarily withdrawn its rotavirus gastroenteritis vaccine RotaShield (live oral tetravalent rotavirus) from the market and requested the immediate return of all doses of the product following reports of intussusception in infants.

Earlier this year, Wyeth-Lederle suspended distribution and administration of the vaccine after the Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System received 15 reports of intussusception (Marketletter July 26). An additional five cases had also been documented by the Minnesota Department of Health.

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Global Vaccine Safety

Global Advisory Committee on Vaccine Safety, 9-10 June 2005

Published in the WER 15 July 2005

The Global Advisory Committee on Vaccine Safety (GACVS), an expert clinical and scientific advisory body reporting to WHO, was established to deal with vaccine safety issues of potential global importance, independently and with scientific rigour. On 9-10 June 2005, the following issues, inter alia, were considered.

Mouse brain-derived Japanese encephalitis vaccine

The Committee considered the decision taken by the Government of Japan on 30 May 2005 to suspend routine vaccination with the mouse brain-derived Japanese encephalitis (JE) vaccine currently used in Japan. This decision followed a review by the Japanese national advisory committee on vaccine adverse events of a single case of acute disseminated encephalomyelitis following JE vaccination and the national committee's conclusion that it could not rule out a causal link with the vaccine. GACVS was advised that there is no definite evidence of an increased risk of acute disseminated encephalomyelitis temporally associated with JE vaccine and a causal link has not been demonstrated. The national authority recommends vaccination in high-risk areas only and for travel to endemic regions. The Japanese Government expects that the national recommendation for vaccination will be reconsidered when newer, possibly safer, inactivated JE vaccines become available. GACVS concluded on the information presently available that there is no evidence to support the decision.
Why Vaccine PV?

- Vaccines are special and complex
- Vaccines are complex
  - In their composition
  - In their usage or schedule for use
- Vaccines are special
  - Vaccination represent one of the most remarkable public health interventions, helping in disease reduction, elimination or eradication
  - Victim of its own success?
Unsafe vaccines can have serious consequences
Safety crises derail immunization programs

• **Real incidents**
  – Tuberculosis following oral BCG
  – Polio following IPV
  – H1N1 immunization and GBS, Narcolepsy

• **Real safety issues**
  – Programme errors.
  – Anaphylaxis.
  – VAPP.
  – Disseminated BCG disease

• **Rumours, poor science and over-reaction**
  – Pertussis vaccine coverage in the UK
  – MS and hepatitis B vaccine in France
  – OPV and chronic diseases in Nigeria
  – Thiomersal and neuro-developmental disorders
Exercise

• What are the issues likely to be encountered following the approval for use of the malaria vaccine?

• What steps should be taken for effective PV of the malaria vaccine?

• Do vaccines for pandemics e.g. Ebola vaccine require any special pharmacovigilance approach?
Facts, Scares and Rumours

CHILD FLU VACCINE CONTAINS MERCURY

Flu jab: Up to a million children have been given vaccines containing mercury

E&O Recommend Be the best of your friends to recommend this.

Pandemic health crisis has seen a quarter of all health children as well as 1% of children with health issues receive flu shots.

Inquiries by the Sunchild contain a surprising amount of mercury that was found in childhood vaccines in 2004 and articles about its safety.

Government Inquiry Has Found That Polio Vaccines For Infants Funded By Gates’ GAVI Are Causing Deaths And Disabilities – Express Tribune

Bill Gates said in a CNN interview “the people who go and engage in those anti-vaccine efforts — you know, they kill children.” But according to the government report quoted in this article, it’s actually Bill Gates’ vaccine foundation that is killing children. Governments in developing nations are taking notice and withdrawing GAVI vaccines from their markets.

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The MMR-autism saga
New vaccines

Coming soon: malaria, dengue, Japanese encephalitis, typhoid conjugate, new TB vaccine, etc...
When should we undertake vaccine PV?

• Safety should be built into vaccines right from the beginning and all through the life of the product

  – The so-called life cycle approach

Vaccine PV Issues

Some Pre-Registration (Pre-licensure) safety issues

• Risk of shedding the vaccine active ingredient, e.g. an attenuated live virus, during the trial
• Reversion to virulence
• Potential for transmission of the vaccine product to close contacts including pregnant women
• Concomitant drugs and vaccines
• Possibility of interference in response by other infectious agents

Some Post-Registration safety considerations

• Reactogenicity of the vaccine
• Adverse events of special interest e.g. Intussusception (Rotavirus), Narcolepsy (H1N1 vaccine)
• Effect of virus strains on reactogenicity
• Adjuvants, preservatives etc and reactogenicity, immunogenicity etc
• EPI schedule and impact on vaccine effectiveness e.g. waning immunity, booster doses etc
Vaccine PV – the next decade
Decade of Vaccines Collaboration
http://www.dovcollaboration.org/

• Vision

– The vision for the DoV is a world in which all individuals and communities enjoy lives free from vaccine-preventable diseases. Its mission is to extend, by 2020 and beyond, the full benefits of immunization to all people, regardless of where they are born, who they are, or where they live
DoVC and Vaccine Safety

• To support low- and middle-income countries in managing such important issues, WHO and its partners have developed the **Global Vaccine Safety Blueprint**

• Implementing the Global Vaccine Safety Blueprint strategies to build capacity for safety surveillance during the Decade of Vaccines (2011–2020) will ensure that **everyone everywhere receives the safest vaccines possible and that safety concerns are not a cause of hesitancy in using vaccines**
Vision for the Global Vaccine Safety Blueprint

Effective vaccine pharmacovigilance systems are established in all countries

http://www.who.int/vaccine_safety/en/
Goals of the GVSI for Vaccine Safety

**Minimal Capacity**
To assist low and middle income countries to have at least minimal capacity for vaccine safety activities.

**Enhanced Capacity**
To enhance capacity for vaccine safety assessment in countries that introduce newly developed vaccines, that introduce vaccines in settings with novel characteristics or that both manufacture and use prequalified vaccines.

**International Collaboration**
To establish a global vaccine safety support structure
Conclusions

• Vaccine PV is an important part of vaccine regulation
• The vaccine product and the process of vaccination must all be considered in vaccine PV
• Methods for PV need to evolve in line with technological advancements and the production of new vaccines
Questions, Comments etc.