

Sanofi Pasteur MSD welcomes European initiatives to set vaccination as standard of prevention in Seniors

Results of review-based evidence on the public health value of vaccination for seniors in Europe presented at WAidid congress

Milan, Italy, February 19 2016 – the first Biennial Congress of the World Association for Infectious Diseases and Immunological Disorders (WAidid), has been held in Milan on February 18-20, 2016.

Two review-based posters* co-authored by a group of European experts and Sanofi Pasteur MSD demonstrated the striking remaining burden of vaccine-preventable diseases in seniors in Europe due to suboptimal vaccine coverage rates (VCR) and heterogeneous vaccination recommendations for seniors across Europe.

"With vaccine-preventable diseases now well controlled in the Paediatric population, a far greater number of cases of some vaccine-preventable diseases occur in seniors, notably since the size of this population keeps increasing", noted Dr Susanna Esposito. "It is important to understand that vaccines are not just for children and that vaccination should also be regarded as a key component of routine prevention to preserve the health of our seniors", she concluded.

With an ageing European population, vaccination is a critical component of preventive strategies to reduce burden of illness and save lives. It aims also at preventing severe complications and their adverse impact on age-related functional decline that could lead to loss of autonomy.

Several vaccinations are recommended across Europe for seniors, mostly in the population aged 65 years and over to protect them against diseases such as influenza, pneumococcal diseases, pertussis, zoster considering their higher vulnerability due to the age-related natural decrease of the immune system (the so-called "immunosenescence").

"In seniors, some infectious diseases such as influenza, pneumococcal diseases or zoster can have a worst outcome compared to younger population, leading in some cases to a cascade of events and to a decline in their functional status, stated Dr Gaetan Gavazzi. " The occurrence of these diseases in seniors can be the start of loss of autonomy, whereas it could be averted thanks to vaccination" he added.

When compared with high childhood VCR (more than 90% of 1-year-old children received the nationally recommended diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (DTaP) and measles vaccinations), the VCR in seniors are far lower in the same European countries. For example, despite flu VCR, official target of 75% recommended by WHO and the EU council, only 2 countries managed to reach it or nearly (The Netherlands and the United Kingdom) to date. In 2012-13, influenza VCR in seniors varied from 1% to 77% (the median was 45%) in 24 European countries¹ and is globally declining throughout Europe in recent years.

Exclusively dedicated to vaccines in Europe, Sanofi Pasteur MSD is a committed Public Health partner, fully focused on European citizens health and sustainability of the healthcare systems. This review demonstrates that vaccines have a key role to play in healthy ageing strategies. In addition to the significant reduction in health spending closely related to health-related quality of daily life, it also emphasises the need for better immunisation programmes for seniors in Europe to ensure the same level of successful outcomes as observed for childhood vaccination.

Key facts from: "**REVIEW OF EPIDEMIOLOGICAL AND MORBIDITY-MORTALITY DATA OF VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASES IN SENIORS IN EUROPE**".

Influenza: It is estimated that about 38,500 deaths occur each year in the EU/EEA countries² with 90% in seniors³. In France, during the 2014-15 flu season, about 30,000 cases were admitted to intensive care units with influenza resulting in 3133 hospitalizations (47% in 65+) and mortality exceeded average mortality by 18,300 individuals (90% in 65+). This excess was due to influenza and other winter related factors⁴. Same trend in most EU countries⁴.

Pneumococcal diseases: 20,785 confirmed cases of invasive pneumococcal disease were reported by 27 EU/EEA countries in 2012, predominantly in seniors⁵.

Zoster: consequence of the reactivation of the varicella zoster virus which remains latent following varicella, zoster represents more than 1.7 million new cases all ages each year in Europe⁶. The risk increases with age⁶. More than 40% of those over 60 years who have had herpes zoster suffer from post-herpetic neuralgia⁷.

Diphtheria: in 2012, 27 cases of diphtheria reported by 8 EU/EEA countries, the majority being in seniors⁸.

Tetanus: In 2012, 123 cases reported, 80% in seniors⁸.

Pertussis: in 2012, 42 525 cases reported by 28 EU/EEA countries⁸. The overall total case rate was twice as high as in previous years⁸. Incidence is increasing in adolescents and adults and gives reasons for concern of transmission to infants⁸.

Polio: no case in any of the 29 reporting EU/EEA countries in 2012⁸.

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About WAidid Congress:

The World Association for Infectious Diseases and Immunological Disorders (WAidid) was founded in July 2014 to advance the scientific research in the field of infectious diseases and immunology and to disseminate information on the related pathologies both at National and International level.

About Sanofi Pasteur MSD www.spmsd.com

Sanofi Pasteur MSD is a European joint venture formed between Sanofi Pasteur (the vaccine division of Sanofi) and Merck (known as MSD outside the United States and Canada). Combining innovation and expertise, Sanofi Pasteur MSD is the only European pharmaceutical company dedicated exclusively to the development of vaccines. Sanofi Pasteur MSD makes use of the combined expertise resulting from Sanofi Pasteur and Merck's research to focus on the development of new vaccines in Europe in order to produce the most effective, most acceptable and better tolerated vaccines.