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Nigeria introduces new 5-in-1 vaccine against meningitis

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Health workers roll out immunisation campaign aiming to reach one million people



Nigeria has become the first country in the world to roll out a new vaccine (called Men5CV/MenFive conjugate vaccine) recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO), which protects people against five strains of the meningococcus bacteria.

MenFive is indicated for active immunization of individuals aged 9 months to 85 years against invasive meningococcal disease caused by Neisseria meningitidis groups A, C, Y, W, and X.

The vaccine and emergency vaccination activities are funded by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, which funds the global meningitis vaccine stockpile, and supports lower-income countries with routine vaccination against meningitis.

Nigeria is one of the 26 meningitis hyper-endemic countries of Africa, situated in the area known as the African Meningitis Belt. Last year, there was a 50% jump in annual meningitis cases reported across Africa.

The new vaccine has the potential to significantly reduce meningitis cases and advance progress in defeating meningitis. This is especially important for countries like Nigeria where multiple serogroups are prevalent. The new vaccine uses the same technology as the meningitis A conjugate vaccine (MenAfriVac), which wiped out meningococcal A epidemics in Nigeria.

This multivalent conjugate vaccine was 13 years in the making and was based on a partnership between PATH and the Serum Institute of India. Financing from the UK government’s Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office was critical to its development.