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Immunization in family medicine – experiences from Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Abstract

Immunization as one of the most important preventive measures has a long tradition in countries of former Yugoslavia and also Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H). Thanks to the longstanding good vaccination coverage during the war 1992-1995, we had a satisfying epidemiological situation related to vaccine-preventable diseases. After the war, the health care reform in B&H was based on the introduction of family medicine as the basis of primary health care. Family medicine teams provide health protection for all family members, except children up to 7 years. One of the segments of work of the teams is immunization. In B&H there are two immunization programmes: for mandatory and facultative immunisation. All persons aged 0-18 years are included in the programme of mandatory immunization which includes the application of the following vaccines: BCG (against tuberculosis), viral hepatitis B, tetanus, whooping cough, poliomyelitis, measles, rubella, mumps and rabies vaccine (for people who have been bitten by rabid or rabies suspect animals). The obligation of family medicine teams is to check the vaccinal status of all people that come to the health care institution and if needed, to vaccinate the vaccines that are missing. Immunization of adults is implemented as preexposure, postexposure and for tavellers. Preexposure and postexposure protection, except the protection against rabies, is carried out by family medicine teams. Immunisation for travellers is carried out in travel clinics, but the counselling role of the family medicine teams has a great importance.

Conclusion: Family medicine teams have an important role in the implementation of immunization programmes in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Key words: immunization, family medicine, B&H

Biography

Zarema Obradović, MD, PhD, specialist of epidemiology, Bosnia and Herzegovina, married. Main areas of work: epidemiology, facultative immunisation, travel medicine, public health. Present positions: Professor at the Faculty for Health Studies, University of Sarajevo; Professor at the Medical Faculty, University of Tuzla; Epidemiologist, Public Health Institute Sarajevo; Focal Point for International Health Regulations (2005) for FB&H; Coordinator for Noncommunicable Diseases (NCD) for FB&H. Member of Association of epidemiologists of FB&H, Academy of Science and Arts B&H for Public Health, Bosnian-Herzegovinian American Academy of Arts and Sciences (BHAAAS), MetaNet - Accademic association for communicable diseases in South-East Europe- DAAD, CCM for TB and HIV/AIDS - B&H. Visiting professor at Medical Faculty, Bucharest, Romania; external evaluator for Ph.D. thesis at the University Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan. Published 170 scientific papers in different publications, medical journals, nacional and international symposiums and congresses. Published books: “Echinococcosis”, “International Travelers Healthcare”, “Epidemiology and Health Statistics”