

Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases reviews use of pneumococcal vaccine in Hong Kong

The Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases (SCVPD) under the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health (DH) convened a meeting yesterday (September 26) to review the use of pneumococcal vaccine in Hong Kong. Updated recommendations were published today (September 27). The meeting reviewed the epidemiology of invasive pneumococcal disease (IPD). Experts noted that IPD was more commonly found among children aged 2 to 4 years and elderly aged 65 years or above in Hong Kong, while serotype 3 was the predominant serotype causing IPD accounting for about half of all cases recorded during 2015 to 2019.

Having reviewed the scientific data, the SCVPD considered that locally available pneumococcal vaccines, including two newly registered vaccines, namely 15-valent pneumococcal conjugated vaccine (PCV15) and 20-valent pneumococcal conjugated vaccine (PCV20), were safe and effective. In addition, PCV15 induced higher immunogenicity, comparing with PCV13 and PCV20, against Serotype 3 which is believed to be more effective in preventing IPD caused by this serotype.

Taking into consideration the local epidemiology and available scientific evidence, the SCVPD recommended to replace PCV13 with PCV15 under both the Hong Kong Childhood Immunisation Programme and the Government Pneumococcal Vaccination Programme. Relevant immunisation schedules for children and high-risk individuals would remain unchanged. When PCV15 is available under relevant government vaccination programmes, children can receive PCV15 with two primary doses given at 2 and 4 months of age followed by a booster dose at 12 months. Unvaccinated elderly aged 65 or above without a high-risk condition should receive a single dose of 23-valent pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (23vPPV) whereas those with high-risk conditions should receive one dose of PCV15 followed by one dose of 23vPPV one year later. For individuals not eligible for relevant government vaccination programme, they may choose to receive any locally registered pneumococcal vaccine to protect themselves against IPD following the manufacturer's recommendations and upon discussion with healthcare professionals. Details of the SCVPD's updated recommendations on the use of pneumococcal vaccine are available on the CHP's website at www.chp.gov.hk/en/static/24008.html.

During the same meeting, the SCVPD also discussed the use of herpes zoster vaccines. Experts considered that locally available herpes zoster vaccines were safe and effective. Individual older adults and adults with immunocompromised conditions may consider receiving herpes zoster vaccine in consultation with their doctors to protect themselves against zoster and its complications. The SCVPD considered that more local data from a cost benefit analysis perspective would be essential for future consideration on the inclusion of herpes zoster vaccine into relevant government vaccination

programmes .