PAKISTAN POLIO UPDATE

17/05/16

OVERVIEW

Thanks to substantial recent progress, the world has never been in a better position to eradicate polio. 2015 witnessed an 82% reduction of cases from 306 in 2014 to 54. During the first quarter of 2015, there were 24 cases were recorded in 14 districts whereas 11 cases were recorded in eight districts during the same period in 2016; a 65% reduction year on year.

Although the number of environmental samples has been increased, the proportion of positive samples has been reduced from 35% in 2014 to 20% in 2015. During the first quarter of 2016, the proportion of positive samples has further reduced to 13%.

These outcomes have been achieved through continued strengthening of operational performance evidenced by still missed children reduced to less than 3% in the January and March national campaigns and most provinces are reaching virus interruption thresholds.

Notwithstanding these encouraging developments, Pakistan remains one of the last two countries standing the single greatest challenge to global eradication.

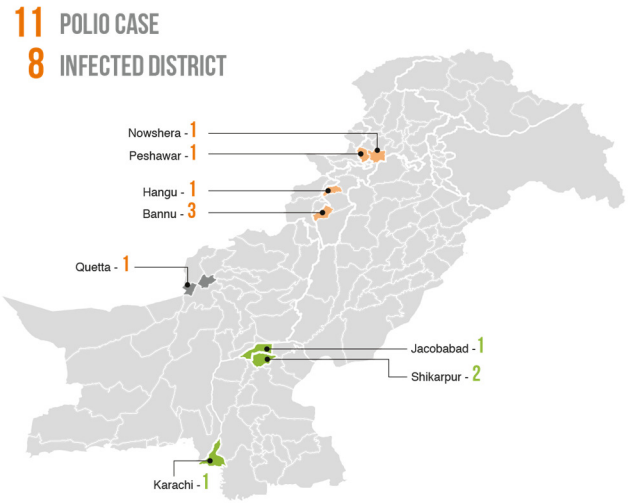
The virus continues to be active in three remaining sanctuaries – the Khyber-Peshawar corridor, Karachi and the Quetta block. The risks span beyond these areas as well.

The intermittent detection of virus from environmental samples in low risk areas in Punjab (Rawalpindi, Lahore, Multan and Faisalabad) and in Northern Sindh (Hyderabad and Sukkur) indicate that pockets of under immunized children are allowing the virus to survive and spread.

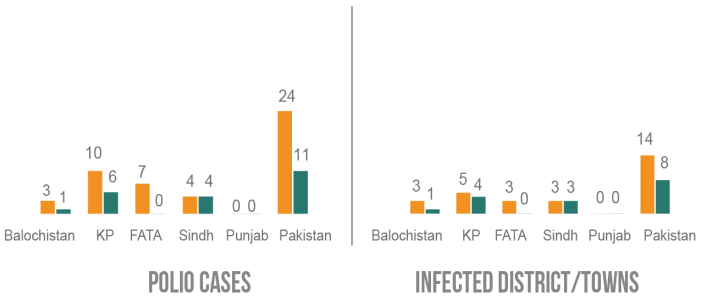
Almost half a million children who were previously missed have been reached, due to gradual improvements in programme quality and access since late 2014.

Significant progress has been made in 9 high quality campaigns planned for the 2015/2016 low season to track the virus in the remaining reservoirs and to find and vaccinate every child under five, with particular focus on missed children.

Driven by the National Emergency Action Plan (NEAP) and implemented by a committed network of federal and provincial Emergency Operation Centres, Pakistan is building its strongest ever defense against polio with stronger surveillance, fewer unvaccinated children and fewer strains of the virus.



Point-to-point comparison May 2015 - May 2016



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صحت محافظ

17/05/16

CAMPAIGN FACTS

Polio is a communicable disease that causes lifelong paralysis. The polio virus spreads from one child to another through contaminated food, water or sewage.

36 million children are vaccinated during each National Immunization Day (NID). The Sub-national Day (SNID) reaches 60% of the total targeted children with the oral polio vaccine (OPV).

For full protection against the virus, all children under 5 years of age must receive OPV each time it is offered. Repeated vaccination builds individual and herd immunity, so both the child and the community receive additional protection with each additional dose.

More than 200,000 heroic health workers have been selected from their local communities and trained to ensure that every child is reached with the vaccine and every parent can trust their local vaccinator to protect their community from polio.

Cross-border collaboration with Afghanistan has been strengthened due to the need to treat border reservoir areas as one epidemiological block. Vaccination campaigns have been synchronized to ensure the virus has nowhere to hide.

Permanent Transit Points were established at railway stations, toll plazas, bus routes in districts bordering Waziristan agencies and across the country are enabling vaccinators an opportunity to engage with parents during population movement, to advocate for vaccination using OPV.

In some areas initiatives like community based vaccination has strengthened micro-planning and stabilized a local, overwhelmingly female workforce. This community-based workforce in now well motivated, trained and supervised, which is helping maintain access because they enjoy the trust of their communities.

POLIO VACCINES

Parents in Pakistan have the highest rate of vaccine acceptance in the world: fewer than 1% in the highest risk areas refuse vaccination. OPV is among the safest vaccines in the world, and has been used in nearly all countries that have stopped polio.

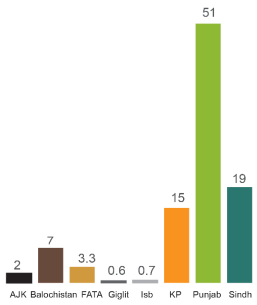
The programme has also added inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) to vaccination campaigns in 2016 in the highest risk districts of Sindh, Balochistan, KP and some agencies of FATA to boost individual immunity of children. In 2015 it was introduced into the routine schedule across the country as well. Combining OPV and IPV provides stronger protection against polio.

COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

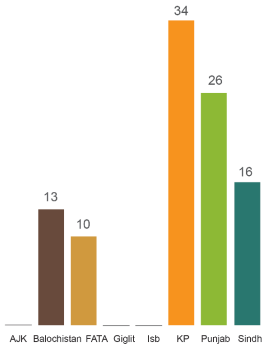
Polio thrives in areas where many health needs converge. As the epidemiological situation changes the programme is responding with increased capacity and creative strategies to improve programme's ability to track the virus down to the most local levels.

1,857 health camps have been arranged in 27 Districts/Towns/Agencies in KP, FATA, Sindh, Punjab benefiting more than 485,000 people, including 10,2711 zero-dose children. These camps are providing additional health interventions alongside polio vaccine such as routine immunization, vaccination for pregnant women and basic curative services for families.

Pakistan is in the best position in its history to stop transmission of polio this year if every child under five in all communities has been immunized during the monthly vaccination campaigns.



% of children aged <5 vaccinated during NID



% of children aged <5 vaccinated during SNID