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ASIA EDITION

# Experts want typhoid vaccination to be a priority

June 14, 2012 | News | By BioSpectrum Bureau

**Experts want typhoid vaccination to be a priority**



**Singapore:** Coalition against Typhoid (CaT), an initiative of the Sabin Vaccine Institute, brought together global health leaders from across Asia in Bangkok to discuss the high burden of endemic typhoid and the growing number of typhoid outbreaks in the region. Experts called on policymakers and ministries of health to make typhoid vaccination a priority in their countries. (Read India's National Vaccine Policy: What next?)

"Pediatric associations and others across the region recognize typhoid's serious impact, particularly the rising and widespread threat of drug resistant typhoid. Many, including India and Indonesia, have made recommendations supporting the use of typhoid vaccines," said Dr Lalitha Mendis, chairperson of the Technical Consultative Group on immunization for the World Health Organization's (WHO) South East Asia Regional Office (SEARO) in New Delhi and immediate past President of the Sri Lanka Medical Council. "National stakeholders and policy makers should review the evidence and discuss the adoption of typhoid vaccines."

Despite a WHO recommendation and the prioritization of typhoid vaccines for "immediate" implementation at a 2009 WHO SEARO meeting, many countries in Asia are yet to recommend or introduce typhoid vaccines.

"Since 1997, the Vietnamese Ministry of Health have used typhoid vaccination to effectively control disease in high risk districts," said Dr Nguyen Van Cuong, deputy head of Vietnam's National Immunization Program. "Successful programs have also been implemented in China, Thailand, and Sri Lanka."

According to the WHO, typhoid impacts an estimated 21 million people and causes more than 200,000 deaths annually, predominantly among preschool and school-age children in developing countries of Asia and Africa. WHO reports that 90 percent of typhoid deaths occur in Asia.

"WHO approved typhoid vaccines are available now, yet these tools are not yet fully embraced by ministries of health across Asia," said Dr Jeremy Farrar, director of the Oxford University Clinical Research Unit in Vietnam.