

Asia calls for urgency in typhoid vaccine

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Singapore: The Coalition against Typhoid (CaT) called on policymakers and ministries of health across Asia to make typhoid vaccination a priority in their countries at the 14th Asia Pacific Congress of Pediatrics. CaT, an initiative of the Sabin Vaccine Institute, brought together leading pediatricians from across Asia to discuss the hyper-endemic burden of typhoid in the region and offer solutions to combat this growing epidemic.

"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 Zulfiqar A Bhutta, founding chair, women and child health division, The Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan. "National stakeholders and policymakers should review the evidence and discuss the adoption of typhoid vaccines."

Despite the World Health Organization's (WHO) recommendation to prioritize typhoid vaccines for "immediate" implementation at a 2009 WHO meeting, many countries in Asia have yet to recommend or introduce typhoid vaccines.

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

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