

PERTUSSIS CONTROL IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION: A REPORT FROM THE GLOBAL PERTUSSIS INITIATIVE

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Roundtable Meetings

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Abstract. The Global Pertussis Initiative (GPI) is an expert, scientific forum that seeks to address the worldwide burden of pertussis. To reduce the global incidence of pertussis, the GPI recommends reinforcing and/or improving current infant and toddler immunization strategies, universal booster dosing of pre-school children, universal booster dosing of adolescents and adults (where appropriate), and co-cooning to protect infants. To tailor these global recommendations to local needs, the GPI has hosted two meetings in Asia-Pacific. Pertussis vaccination practices differ across Asia-Pacific, with only some countries recommending booster dosing. Given the limited use of laboratory diagnostics, disease surveillance was considered inadequate. To make informed health policy decisions on pertussis prevention, more robust epidemiological data are needed. Because of its unique clinical presentation, adolescent and adult pertussis is under-recognized by lay and medical communities. Consequently, adolescent and adult disease likely exists even in Asian-Pacific countries where epidemiological data are presently lacking. In Asia-Pacific, there exist issues with health care access and costs. Fragmented health care will negatively impact the effectiveness of any proposed immunization strategies. The GPI recommends—in Asia-Pacific and elsewhere—that countries first educate lay and medical communities on pertussis, while simultaneously implementing robust surveillance practices. Once armed with sufficient epidemiological evidence, the prevention strategies recommended by the GPI can then be appropriately (and more effectively) introduced.

Keywords: pertussis control, Global Pertussis Initiative, Asia-Pacific region

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