Reasons behind the differences in national vaccination schedules for under-five (EuSANH workshop)

Thursday 8 November, 8.30-10:00
Organiser: European Science Advisory Network for Health (EuSANH)
Chairpersons: prof. LJ Gunning and ir. TMM Coenen

Background: Vaccination schedules in the member states are not always similar. In many countries there are differences in the under-five schedules although the scientific evidence on which the schedules are based is identical. Other than scientific reasons for the variety of programmes may well be involved.

Members of EuSANH, a European network of independent science advisory bodies on health, are involved in many countries in providing the evidence-based science advice for national vaccination programmes (www.eusanh.eu).

In this workshop we will have a discussion on the scientific evidence for our vaccination programmes and the reasons behind the differences. The reason to address this difference in scheduling is that there appears to be evidence that it affects the confidence parents have in the vaccination programme. If so, it would be important to weigh that effect when planning vaccination schedules in the different member states. It may well be that the observed differences in the programmes have nothing to do with the scientific evidence but are the result of other policy issues. But if the effect of that difference is that it creates a confidence gap, we may well need to reconsider the benefit of a European approach.

The issue will be presented by prof. Karl Ekdahl from ECDC and Heidi Theeten from the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Institute of the Antwerp University. This will be followed by a panel discussion with EuSANH members’ experts on the observed differences.

Programme

8.30 Introduction by the EuSANH president, Louise Gunning-Schepers

8.35 Differences of vaccination coverage and uptake in the EU Member States
Karl Ekdahl, Head of Unit Public Health Capacity and Communication, ECDC, Sweden

8.55 Optimizing vaccine schedules: balancing science and public confidence
Heidi Theeten, Vaccine and Infectious Disease Institute, University of Antwerp, Belgium

9.15 Discussion with the panel and audience on the scientific evidence for their national vaccination programmes and the reasons behind the differences.
Panel of EuSANH members:
- Daniel Floret, Haut Conseil de la Santé Publique, France
- Felix Gurtner, Federal Office of Public Health, Switzerland
- Pim van Gool, Health Council of the Netherlands, the Netherlands
- Hanna Nohynek, National Institute for Health and Welfare, Finland
- Carlos Segovia, Carlos III Health Institute, Spain