Seminar abstracts

Estimating pneumococcal vaccine coverage among Australian Aboriginal children and children with a medically at-risk condition using record linkage

Presenter: A.Y.M. Alamgir Kabir

Degree: PhD
Supervisory team: A/Prof Heather Gidding, A/Prof Anthony Newall, Dr Rob Menzies, Dr Deborah Randall
Date of PhD commencement: 26 March 2018

Abstract:

A primary course of 3 doses of pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) plus additional doses of PCV and pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPV) have been recommended for all children with a medical risk condition (MRC) and PPV for Aboriginal children in Western Australia (WA) since 2001. However, little is known about adherence to these recommendations. Our objective was to estimate the coverage of PCV dose 3 and additional doses among these risk groups.

Immunisation, birth, hospitalisation and death data were linked for children born between July 2001 and December 2012 in New South Wales (NSW) and WA. We estimated coverage among births pre- and post-introduction of universal vaccination. The total cohort of 1,313,560 children included 63,897 (5%) Aboriginal and 28,493 (2%) with ≥1 MRC. Despite funding for children with MRCs, uptake of PCV dose 4 by 24 months was low and negligible for PPV by 6 years; for WA Aboriginal children, only half had received a PPV by 36 months.
Barriers and facilitators of immunization in refugee and migrant communities in Australia

Presenter: Ikram Abdi

Degree: PhD
Supervisory team: Dr Holly Seale, Dr Rob Menzies
Date of PhD commencement: March 2017

Abstract:

Immunisation programs available in low and middle-income countries include fewer vaccines in comparison to Australia’s National Immunisation Program. As a result, refugees and migrants may have a heightened risk of being inadequately immunised upon arrival to Australia.

Whilst there are a few studies exploring the barriers to healthcare access in refugee and migrant communities in Australia, not much is known regarding the underlying attitudes and causes that could be contributing to under-immunisation in this group. Moreover, some of these studies have indicated that east African refugees and migrants have low vaccination coverage.

Thus, this thesis explores the barriers and facilitators impacting on vaccine uptake in East African refugees and migrants through the conduction of in-depth interviews. It also evaluates the health literacy demand and cultural appropriateness of current immunisation resources aimed at refugee and migrant communities. Moreover, to address the gaps identified in previous refugee immunisation research, an independent medical education program on refugee immunisation was developed for general practitioners.

The final component of this thesis examines the vaccine disease burden and factors impeding vaccine uptake in east African refugees and migrants using data from the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register.