

One injection, ten years' protection (Part 1)

INTRODUCTION

(Sahadatou Bawa Touré, Yellow Fever Vaccination Campaign Observer)

The whole of Western Africa and beyond, including my country, Togo, is subject to suffering and death caused by endemic disease. Every year, tens of thousands fall victim to diseases like malaria, respiratory infections, AIDS, diarrheal diseases, measles and tuberculosis.

Unfortunately there are no known preventive measures for some diseases, for example malaria or AIDS, but for many other conditions we have vaccination.

Togo's National Yellow Fever Vaccination Campaign is an excellent example of what can be achieved with respect to the health of the nation providing the will is there.

TITLE

One injection, ten years' protection

Or the story of a vaccination campaign in Togo

According to WHO experts, 33 African countries are affected by yellow fever. A total of 206,000 people in 12 African countries were infected by the virus in 2006, resulting in the death of an estimated 52,000 victims. What is more, it has been calculated that, if no new preventive measures are put in place, there is no doubt that between 1.5 and 2.7 million people worldwide will be killed by sweeping yellow fever epidemics between the year 2008 and the year 2050.

(Dr. Danladi Ibrahim Nassoury, Epidemiology Division Head)

During colonisation, Togo had the benefit of mass vaccination campaigns. From the thirties, when the vaccine first began to be used, to the sixties, and after the country gained independence, the mass campaigns against yellow fever continued, with the most recent being carried out in 1984. Since then, we had not had a single case of yellow fever - until November/December 2006, when three cases in two of the northern border areas were reported at the same time. These two areas had an epidemiological history of being high risk areas with respect to yellow fever. Three cases arising simultaneously therefore constituted an epidemic. In fact, just one case of yellow fever constitutes an epidemic.

(Marionette show about vaccination)

I have brought you together this morning so that the competent health authorities can tell us about yellow fever and why vaccination is necessary.

(Prof. Ag. Atakouma D. Yawo, Pediatric Department Head, CHU of Lomé)

Yellow fever is an infectious disease caused by the Amaril virus. It is a disease found in both humans and animals, known as an anthroozoonosis. The virus is harboured by monkeys living in the jungle, who are occasionally bitten by the *A. aegypti* mosquito, which absorbs the virus. It then develops in the mosquito's digestive tract, making the mosquito a vector of the disease, which it transmits to any healthy, but unprotected, person - in other words, somebody who has not been vaccinated.

(Health care worker training others)

This is called a self-blocking syringe. It is intended to be used once only. After the injection, the syringe blocks and it cannot be used again.

(Sister Paule Raymonde Dedje, Nyekonakpoe, CMS Director)

Our role here is to train people who are going to be involved in the vaccination campaign: vaccinators, recorders and tally keepers. It is a very important job, because if we do not train them properly they might not do things properly in the field. We provide this training to make sure that things are done well.

(Dr. Danladi Ibrahim Nassoury, Epidemiology Division Head)

We drafted a communications strategy directed towards the various populations. How did we go about it? We used local radio stations, as people listen to them a lot because they broadcast in the different national dialects. We also used opinion leaders, such as district chiefs, village chiefs and religious leaders. The country's highest authorities were involved in launching the campaign.

We have noticed that, compared with other campaigns, this one has been particularly popular. Because we are vaccinating everyone, men and women from every social category, as opposed to just expectant mothers and the under-fives. This has been a significant factor in encouraging people to support the campaign.

(Sahadatou Bawa Touré, Yellow Fever Vaccination Campaign Observer)

There has been a significant investment of human resources all over the country, with more than 15,000 doctors, nurses, midwives and other health workers being

mobilised by the ministry to ensure the success of the campaign.

(Dr. Danladi Ibrahim Nassoury, Epidemiology Division Head)

Several strategies have been brought into play during this campaign. One is a fixed strategy enabling health workers to carry out vaccinations at their place of work in the medical outposts. Next we have the advanced strategies. The vaccination team goes to another place and sets up a vaccination outpost, for example in a school or other public service. We managed to get to the furthest hamlets and farms and make sure we reached these isolated populations.

(Sahadatou Bawa Touré, Yellow Fever Vaccination Campaign Observer)

Here in this isolated little village I get a real sense of how well the vaccination campaign has been perceived by the local inhabitants. We have travelled a long way to help them, free of charge, and they are very grateful. Their looks and smiles speak far louder than words.

Getting vaccinated is not a meaningless gesture, it is a gesture of hope, because it can save lives, and that is something that is very well understood.

(Television journalist)

The yellow fever vaccination campaign actually started five days ago in the coastal region, although it was officially launched today.

(End of Part 1)