



UEMO

UNION EUROPÉENNE DES MÉDECINS OMNIPRATICIENS/MÉDECINS DE FAMILLE

EUROPEAN UNION OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS/FAMILY PHYSICIANS

UEMO BULLETIN N°03 – 2017

Dear UEMO Members,

This month's bulletin is focused on a variety of EU-related health topics such as the revision of the Audio Visual Media Directive (AVMSD), a new outbreak of Measles across Europe, new findings regarding the link between exposure to chemicals and illness, Europe's progress towards the elimination of hepatitis B & C and possible future developments regarding the status of EU health workers in the UK.

Mention is also made to UEMO election as a permanent representative of the HTA Network Stakeholder Pool.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue!

Yours sincerely,

Aldo L'UPO

UEMO President

EU NEWS

- ❖ Revision of the Audio Visual Media Directive
- ❖ Measles yet to be eradicated from Europe
- ❖ Where does Europe stand in the elimination of Hepatitis B and C?
- ❖ The UK under pressure to offer special status to EU health workers to protect them against BREXIT.
- ❖ An Universal Declaration of Gender Equality is supported by the Portuguese President
- ❖ The newly elected President of the Portuguese Medical Association took office

WORLD NEWS

- ❖ An atlas to tackle the various health-related threats faced by children over the world
- ❖ Vaccines of the future may be without needles
- ❖ World Tuberculosis Day 2017

UEMO NEWS

- ❖ UEMO becomes permanent representative of HTA Stakeholder Pool.



EU NEWS

REVISION OF THE AUDIO VISUAL MEDIA DIRECTIVE:

28TH MARCH 2017



The revision of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) offers an opportunity to better protect children against advertising and placement of products.

EU rules on audiovisual media services (TV, on demand-platforms) are also critical for the protection against harmful advertising of alcohol and foods high in fat, sugar and salt (HFSS).

The proposed revision is a key opportunity to regulate the potential exposure of young people to health-harmful marketing.

Next steps:

Adoption of the opinion of the Culture & Education Committee April 2017
Vote in Plenary May 2017

MEASLES YET TO BE ERADICATED FROM EUROPE

27TH MARCH 2017



Over 500 measles cases were reported for January 2017 in the WHO European Region. Measles continues to spread within and among European countries, with the potential to cause large outbreaks wherever immunization coverage has dropped below the necessary threshold of 95%.

“With steady progress towards elimination over the past 2 years, it is of particular concern that measles cases are climbing in Europe,” says Dr Zsuzsanna Jakab, WHO Regional Director for Europe.

Two-thirds of the Region’s 53 countries have interrupted endemic transmission of measles; however, 14 remain endemic, according to the Regional Verification Commission for Measles and Rubella Elimination (RVC).



Measles is a highly contagious virus that can cause potentially serious illness. As measles remains endemic in most parts of the world, it can spread to any country, including those that have eliminated the disease. Every un- or under-immunized person regardless of age is therefore at risk of contracting the disease; this is especially true in those countries where persistently low immunization rates increase the risk of a large outbreak with possible tragic consequences. National authorities should maximize their efforts to achieve and/or sustain at least 95% coverage with 2 doses of measles-containing vaccine to prevent circulation in the event of an importation.

Appropriate response measures include appropriate response measures. These include enhancing surveillance and identifying and immunizing those at heightened risk of infection, especially susceptible persons who may be or come in contact with infected persons, as well as engaging communities to encourage vaccination for all those who need it.

In adopting the European Vaccine Action Plan 2015–2020, all 53 Member States of the Region committed to eliminating measles and rubella as one of the Region's priority immunization goals.

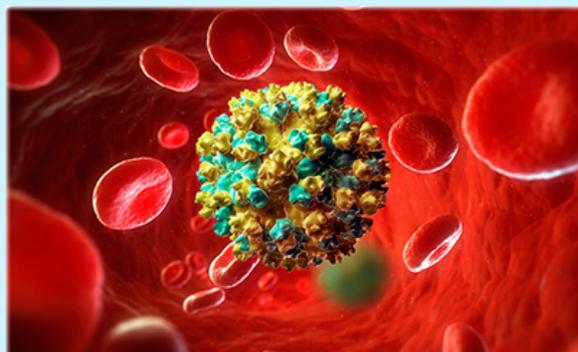
European countries to achieve this goal, providing comprehensive support to strengthen immunization programmes, increase population immunity and confidence in vaccines, build disease surveillance capacities, and respond to outbreaks in line with countries' commitment to elimination.

Find out more:

- ❖ The European Vaccine Action Plan is available [here](#).

WHERE DOES EUROPE STAND IN THE ELIMINATION OF HEPATITIS B AND C?

17TH MARCH 2017



In 2016, a regional action plan for Europe that aims to contribute to the implementation of the global viral hepatitis elimination strategy was developed by the WHO Regional Office for Europe. In an article published today in *Eurosurveillance*, the authors take a closer look how Europe is doing according to the ten indicators and targets outlined in this plan. In short: Europe still has some way to go if it wants to eliminate viral hepatitis by 2030.

It is estimated that just under 10 million Europeans from European Union and European Economic Area (EU/EEA) countries are infected with chronic hepatitis B and C infection – most of them without knowing it as viral hepatitis is largely asymptomatic. In light of this,



the regional WHO action plan from 2016 can be an important driver to help European countries in their fight against the hepatitis B and C epidemics.

An article published in the *eurosurveillance* magazine entitled: "Towards elimination of hepatitis B and C in European Union and European Economic Area countries: monitoring the World Health Organization's global health sector strategy core indicators and scaling up key interventions" states that "European countries have already made progress in recent years implementing primary and secondary prevention measures. Indeed, measures aimed at reducing injecting-drug-related harm among people who inject drugs, such as OST (opioid substitution treatment) and NSP (needle and syringe programmes), now reach many of those who need them [such as people who inject drugs, migrants or men who have sex with men] and most countries have in place a hepatitis B vaccination programme with high levels of coverage (95%). These measures have had an impact on the epidemiology of hepatitis B and C." This impact mainly affects the incidence of new infections argues the article.

However, the authors from ECDC, the European Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) and the WHO Regional Office for Europe found in their analysis of the epidemiological and programmatic indicators of the action plan "that current data sources in most EU/EEA countries are insufficient, particularly for assessing the epidemiological burden and for monitoring the different steps along the cascade of care". This greatly hampers the successful monitoring of Europe's progress toward elimination of viral hepatitis.

ECDC has been working with the EU/EEA countries to improve the quality of the epidemiological data to get a clearer picture of the burden of viral hepatitis across Europe. Screening, care and treatment of the disease could learn from existing models in HIV, the authors find. With a monitoring approach for interventions including diagnosis and treatment along the continuum of care.

Find out more:

- ❖ The full Eurosurveillance article on the elimination of Hepatitis B & C in Europe is available [here](#).

UK PRESSURED TO OFFER SPECIAL STATUS TO EU HEALTH WORKERS TO PROTECT THEM AGAINST BREXIT

14TH MARCH 2017



The UK government is facing calls to introduce an "NHS passport" giving foreign workers in the health service special status during Brexit talks.

Some British politicians have joined to put pressure on Theresa May to ring fence healthcare staff from the EU to avoid an NHS recruitment crisis.



Conservative and former doctor Dan Poulter who fears a collapse in care after we leave the European Union declared: "The NHS is heavily reliant on the contributions made by many dedicated EU healthcare professionals, and without them, our health and care system simply wouldn't be able to cope."

He added: "Protecting the rights of EU nationals to continue to live in the UK and care for patients is essential, but it is also important that we look after the best interests of the patients of tomorrow. Having the right work visa rules to ensure that in future, healthcare professionals from within the EU can continue to contribute to the NHS and care for patients, must be a priority."

AN UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF GENDER EQUALITY IS SUPPORTED BY THE PORTUGUESE PRESIDENT

21TH MARCH 2017



The Portuguese President, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, spoke during the opening session of the third conference of the cycle "Gender Equality – a challenge for the coming decade", that took place in Coimbra, in February 18th.

Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa stated that the gender equality is related to a "civic culture problem" as well as a "mindset" issue. For the President it is "easier to create laws, than to apply them or to change mentalities". "Women are, in many college degrees, a large majority". That happens also in some "professional activities and even in Public Administration or companies, although not in management positions. And in politics we notice a clear inequality between men and women".

As an ongoing project of this conference cycle, it is being developed a proposal for the Universal Declaration of Gender Equality that will be send to UNESCO. This declaration was supported by the Portuguese President, who considered this to be a "good cause", while pointing out the feminine role.

Find out more:

- ❖ More information [here](#).

THE NEWLY ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE PORTUGUESE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION TOOK OFFICE

14TH MARCH 2017



Miguel Guimarães was elected as the President of the Portuguese Medical Association (Ordem dos Médicos) for the three-year term (2017-2019).

The inauguration ceremony took place in the Noble Room of the Sciences Academy of Lisbon. Among the distinguished guests were the Portuguese President, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, the previous President of the Portuguese Medical Association, José Manuel Silva, and several representatives of the medical community, namely, the elected regional representatives for the Medical Association: Carlos Cortes (Coimbra) and Alexandre Lourenço (Lisboa).

In his speech, Miguel Guimarães, revealed the “emotion, honor and privilege” he was feeling by assuming the leadership of the Medical Association. The now inducted president reaffirmed his will to conduct his role with “spirit of dialogue, cooperation and absolute commitment” with all the elected members and all the Portuguese practitioners.

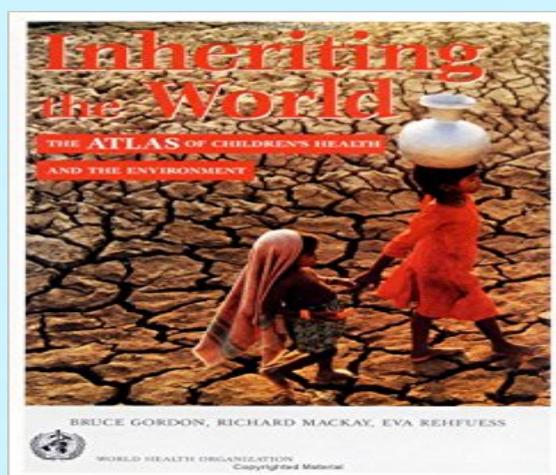
Find out more:

- ❖ More information [here](#).

World News

AN ATLAS TO TACKLE THE VARIOUS HEALTH-RELATED THREATS FACED BY CHILDREN OVER THE WORLD

02ND MARCH 2017



More than three million children die every year due to unhealthy environments. This atlas tackles issues as diverse as the devastating and largely unknown impact of indoor air pollution, the unfashionable yet huge tragedy of sanitation, and complex emerging issues like climate change.

Full-colour maps and graphics clearly demonstrate the threats that children face everywhere, and underscore the impact of poverty on children’s health. While this crisis cannot be ignored and demands urgent action, success stories, such as the Montreal Protocol, show a way forward for the world to make sure that our children will inherit a safer planet and a brighter future.



Find out more:

- ❖ The full document is downloadable [here](#).

VACCINES OF THE FUTURE MAY BE WITHOUT NEEDLES

24TH MARCH 2017



A US company based in Boston wants to change the way that vaccines are administered. Vaxess Technologies, Inc. received two grants from The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, totaling \$6 million dollars, to fund their innovative work in vaccine stabilization and delivery technologies.

In vaccine administration, even with an incredibly effective vaccine, there are perpetual hurdles to overcome. One, for example, is the availability of syringes and needles. This was an issue just last year when, despite the long awaited arrival of the yellow fever vaccine in the African regions where outbreaks were occurring - there was a needle shortage and the vaccine could not be administered.

Another hurdle is referred to as the 'cold chain' - the need to keep a vaccine refrigerated. This may not be such an issue here, but it is a huge concern in other areas of the world - low resource

areas that lack consistent refrigeration. In the battle against polio, the trained polio vaccinators need to walk many miles each day in Syria, Pakistan and Afghanistan - the strong holds of the polio virus - trying to reach each and every last child. They do this carrying one or multiple coolers to keep the vaccine from going bad

The technology developed by Vaxess is looking to change how vaccination is done by developing new technologies that remove the need for both needles and the cold chain. Their innovation is called the MIMIX sustained-release microneedle patch platform. The MIMIX is a patch that is placed on the skin for five minutes, with no need for needles.

MIMIX uses silk at the heart of a novel stabilization technology. Specifically, fibroin, one of the two main proteins found in silk, has emerged recently as the hottest new material for protecting and preserving biological materials. Its structure gives the silk the ability to protect biological compounds, keeping them stable at higher temperatures and protecting them from degradation.

The funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which is committed to improving vaccine access in resource poor settings, will go towards the preclinical development of the MIMIX for two vaccines - the polio vaccine (IPV) and measles rubella (MR) vaccines.

The company, Vaxess, was founded by a group of students at Harvard University who were interested in finding solutions to increase vaccine access.

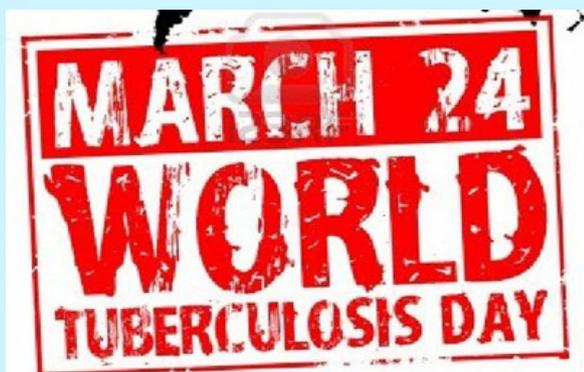
Find out more:

- ❖ For more details regarding this new technology visit Vaxess website [here!](#)



WORLD TUBERCULOSIS DAY

24TH MARCH 2017



World Tuberculosis Day celebrated on 24 March each year, is an opportunity to raise awareness about the burden of tuberculosis (TB) worldwide and the status of TB prevention and care efforts. It is also an opportunity to mobilize political and social commitment for further progress in efforts to end TB.

2017 is the second year of a two-year "Unite to End TB" campaign for World TB Day. This year, WHO will place a special focus on uniting efforts to "Leave No One Behind", including actions to address stigma, discrimination, marginalization and overcome barriers to access care.

The Sustainable Development agenda embraces the principle of ensuring no one is left behind in an effort to transform the world and improve people's lives for the better. Addressing the health needs of the disadvantaged, the marginalized, those out of reach of the health system will mean

improving access to health services for everyone. This is essential in order to reach the target of ending TB by 2030 as part of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the WHO End TB Strategy.

World TB Day provides the platform for affected persons and communities, civil society organizations, health-care providers, policy makers, development partners and others to advocate, discuss and plan further collaboration to fulfil the promise of reaching all people with quality TB prevention and care services, as well as enabling TB prevention through multisectoral development efforts.

Find out more:

- ❖ [Click here](#) to access The World Tuberculosis Day 2017 official webpage.

UEMO NEWS

UEMO BECOMES PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE HTA STAKHOLDER POOL



We are delighted to announce that Daniel Widmer (UEMO) has been elected as permanent representative within the HTA network stakeholder pool. Mr Widmer will represent the Health Care Providers group which is composed of the 10 following organizations: CED, EAHP, EFPC, HOPE, EUPHA, ESC, ESMO, UEMO, PGEU, and CPME.

UEMO has participated to its 1st HTA meeting as permanent representative in Brussels on March 29th 2017. Some of the topics to be discussed during the meeting included: Mapping of HTA national organisations, Synergies between regulatory and HTA issues on pharmaceuticals, National developments on HTA, Proposal for a Regulation on medical devices, and many more.

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