



COALITION to STRENGTHEN
the HPV IMMUNIZATION
COMMUNITY



Introduction during Covid-19: Implications and Strategies to tackle interruptions. The case of Cameroon

Present by: Njoh Andreas Ateke MD, MSc, PhD(c) Global Health
Deputy Permanent Secretary EPI Cameroon

CHIC SPC Symposium

HPV Vaccination Programs: From Pre-introduction Planning to Restoration and Sustainability

24 – 25 Sept 2022 – Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Outline

- Background
- HPV vaccine introduction during the covid-19 pandemic
- The delivery strategy adopted
- The challenges for vaccine delivery
- How challenges were addressed
- Results
- Perspectives and Conclusion

1. Background



Demography

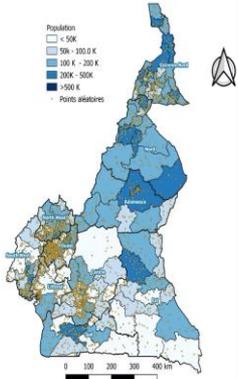
- Population 2022: total (**27 795 843**)
- Surface area: 475 442 Km²

Organization of the health system

- Three levels within ten regions
- 2022
 - 197 HD with 1949 HA and 5972 HF
 - 70% (4181) vaccinating
 - Private sector: 55%HF

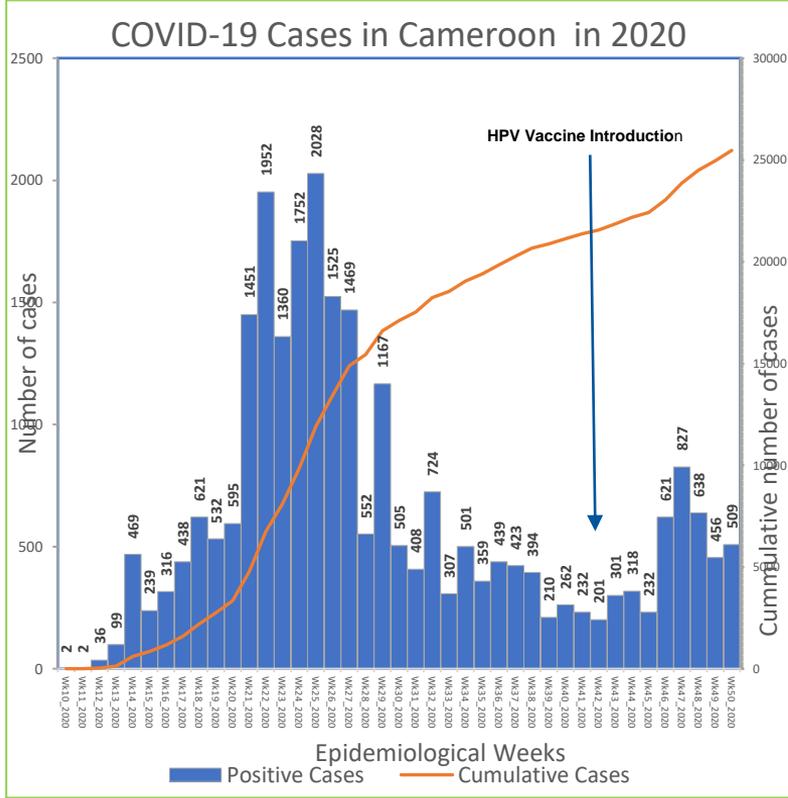
Work context

- Insecurity in some parts of the country
 - Socio-political crisis: NW/SW
 - Occasional armed conflict: Far North
- First COVID-19 case: March 2020¹
- HPV vaccination began on 12 October 2020 (target 40%)



1. Tih F. Cameroon confirms first coronavirus case. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/cameroon-confirms-first-coronavirus-case/1756866> (accessed August 20, 2021).

2. HPV vaccine introduction during COVID-19



- COVID-19 outbreak March 2020

- The disease's rapid spread
- Government restrictions to gatherings, including mass vaccination activities¹
- Decline in the utilization of health services, including routine vaccination services²
- Measures ensuring continuity of vaccination services: April 2020
- Increasing COVID-19 cases
- HPV vaccination 12 October 2020: new target girls 9

1. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE STRATEGY TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC (COVID-19) _ Prime Minister's Office n.d. <https://www.spm.gov.cm/site/?q=en/content/government-response-strategy-coronavirus-pandemic-covid-19> (accessed August 20, 2021)
2. Chelo D, Nguefack F, Enyama D, Nansseu R, Feudjo Tefoueyet G, Mbassi Awa HD, et al. Impact and projections of the COVID-19 epidemic on attendance and routine 4 vaccinations at a pediatric referral hospital in Cameroon. Archives de Pédiatrie 2021;28:441–50. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.arcped.2021.05.006>.

3. The delivery strategy adopted

- Strategic planning

- National level:

- Elaboration of vaccination guideline
- Set target population and date of onset of vaccination
- Defined strategies and budget
- Elaborated communication strategy: the context of fake news on HPV vaccine

- Implimentation

- Sub-national levels

- Cautious communication through media
- Mobilization through district FP com
- Sensitization of selected schools per district
- Vaccination in routine
 - Health facilities & primary schools
- No micro plan

4. The challenges for vaccine delivery (1/2)

- HPV vaccination faced various limitations and challenges
 - Introduced as a routine vaccine to a new target, difficult to access
 - Some communities had limited information on cervical cancer and the role of vaccines¹
 - Insecurity limited vaccination in some parts of the country²
 - Looting, closure of health facilities
 - Distortion of supply chain
 - Population displacement
 - Loss of trust on government services

1. Roux AN, Kenfack B, Ndjalla A, Sormani J, Wisniak A, Tatrai K, Vassilakos P, Petignat P, Schmidt N (2021) Barriers to cervical cancer prevention in rural Cameroon: a qualitative study on healthcare providers' perspective. *BMJ Open* 11:e043637
2. Saidu Y, Vouking M, Njoh AA, et al (2021) The effect of the ongoing civil strife on key immunisation outcomes in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon. *Conflict and Health* 15:8



4. The challenges for vaccine delivery (2/2)

- HPV vaccination faced various limitations and challenges
 - People doubted vaccine safety
 - Some feared the introduction of the COVID-19 vaccine
 - The Christian and Muslim authorities denied vaccine¹
 - Why introduced just to 9-year girls^{1,2}
 - Preferred prayers³
 - Teachers found it challenging to decide on the health of the girl child

1. Kingah L (2020) Legideon News Now //-After Catholic Church, Muslim community bans Administration of Gardasil vaccine on Girls. <https://legideon.org/index.php?page=view/article/3024/1>. Accessed 19 Sep 2022
2. Roux AN, Kenfack B, Ndjalla A, Sormani J, Wisniak A, Tatrai K, Vassilakos P, Petignat P, Schmidt N (2021) Barriers to cervical cancer prevention in rural Cameroon: a qualitative study on healthcare providers' perspective. *BMJ Open* 11:e043637
3. Fru CN, Andrew T, Greenspan D, Cho FN, Martin M, Livingstone J, Thierry T, Fru PN, Derick N (2021) Vaccination Hesitancy: The Case of Cervical Cancer Vaccination in Fako Division, Cameroon. *International Journal of TROPICAL DISEASE & Health* 32–43

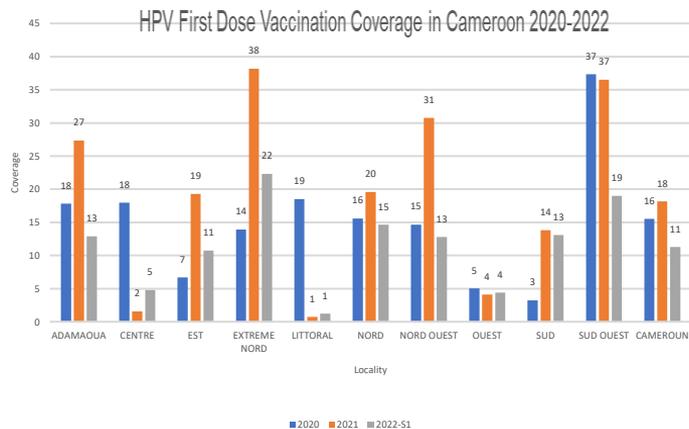


5. How challenges were addressed

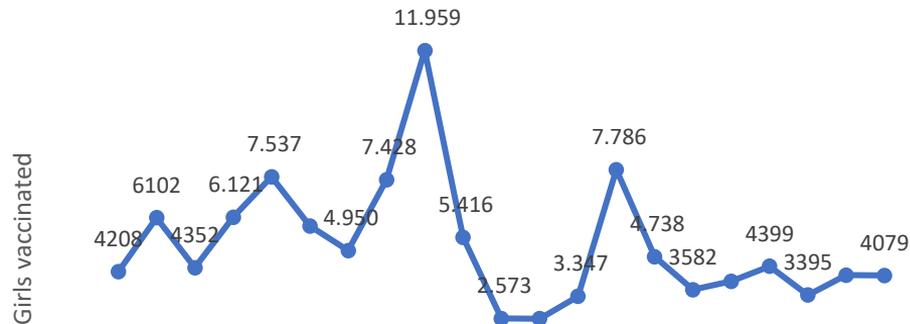
- Setting up measures to continue vaccination amid COVID-19
 - Improve use of routine immunization
 - Conduct mass vaccination
- School official requested parents sign an informed consent to vaccinate the girls
- Interventions to improve immunization in conflict regions¹
 - Use of locally accepted people to carryout immunization (door-to-door and IDPs site)
 - Adapting vaccination service delivery to the security period per location
 - Use of NGOs to ship vaccines
- Including HPV vaccination in the periodic intensification of routine immunization nationwide in 2021

1. Njoh AA, Saidu Y, Bachir HB, et al (2022) Impact of periodic intensification of routine immunization within an armed conflict setting and COVID-19 outbreak in Cameroon in 2020. Conflict and Health 16:29

5. Results



HPV First Dose Vaccination Trend: 2020-2021



- Best country's performance in 2021
- PIRI: Highest coverage in SW 2020 (insecurity)
- Fewer PIRI in SW after 2020
- Nationwide intensification of vaccination 2021
- Performance is falling
- Second dose coverage remains < 5%

6. Perspectives and conclusion

- Despite the efforts, HPV coverage remains below target
- To improve coverage, some majors have been taken
 - Single dose protocol & introducing HPV vaccine to males 9 years old (Cameroon's NITAG, 2020)
 - Vaccination and communication through confessionals (CBC)
 - Use the Cameroon Society of Obs/Gyns to intensify communication
 - Carryout nationwide periodic intensification of HPV vaccination from ending 2022
 - Interpersonnal communication
 - Door-to-door vaccination
- With these measures, we are sure to gain several points in HPV vaccination

Thank you for listening

Bibliography

- Chelo D, Nguefack F, Enyama D, Nansseu R, Feudjo Tefoueyet G, Mbassi Awa HD, et al. Impact and projections of the COVID-19 epidemic on attendance and routine vaccinations at a pediatric referral hospital in Cameroon. *Archives de Pédiatrie* 2021;28:441–50. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.arcped.2021.05.006>.
- Dhis-2 Cameroon. <https://dhis-minsante-cm.org/dhis-web-pivot/>. Accessed September 19, 2022
- Fouogue JT, Noubom M, Kenfack B, Dongmo NT, Tabeu M, Megozeu L, et al. Poor knowledge of COVID-19 and unfavourable perception of the response to the pandemic by healthcare workers at the Bafoussam Regional Hospital (West Region-Cameroon). *Pan African Medical Journal* 2020;37. <https://doi.org/10.11604/pamj.suppl.2020.37.1.25688>.
- Fru CN, Andrew T, Greenspan D, Cho FN, Martin M, Livingstone J, Thierry T, Fru PN, Derick N (2021) Vaccination Hesitancy: The Case of Cervical Cancer Vaccination in Fako Division, Cameroon. *International Journal of TROPICAL DISEASE & Health* 32–43
- GOVERNMENT RESPONSE STRATEGY TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC (COVID-19) _ Prime Minister's Office n.d. <https://www.spm.gov.cm/site/?q=en/content/government-response-strategy-coronavirus-pandemic-covid-19> (accessed August 20, 2021).
- Haddison E, Tambasho A, Kouamen G, Ngwafor R (2021) Vaccinators' Perception of HPV Vaccination in the Saa Health District of Cameroon. *Front Public Health* 9:748910
- Kingah L (2020) Legideon News Now //-After Catholic Church, Muslim community bans Administration of Gardasil vaccine on Girls. <https://legideon.org/index.php?page=view/article/3024/1>. Accessed 19 Sep 2022

- Ngeh EN, Kuaban C. COVID-19: challenges and the impact on care in clinical settings in Cameroon. *The Pan African Medical Journal* 2020;35:122. <https://doi.org/10.11604/pamj.suppl.2020.35.24929>.
- Njoh AA, Saidu Y, Bachir HB, et al (2022) Impact of periodic intensification of routine immunization within an armed conflict setting and COVID-19 outbreak in Cameroon in 2020. *Conflict and Health* 16:29
- Roux AN, Kenfack B, Ndjalla A, Sormani J, Wisniak A, Tatrai K, Vassilakos P, Petignat P, Schmidt N (2021) Barriers to cervical cancer prevention in rural Cameroon: a qualitative study on healthcare providers' perspective. *BMJ Open* 11:e043637
- Saidu Y, Vouking M, Njoh AA, et al (2021) The effect of the ongoing civil strife on key immunisation outcomes in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon. *Conflict and Health* 15:8
- Tih F. Cameroon confirms first coronavirus case. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/cameroon-confirms-first-coronavirus-case/1756866> (accessed August 20, 2021).

Target (Girls 9 years)

REGIONS	2020	2021	2022
ADAMAOUA	20 365	22 772	22 846
CENTRE	65 838	67 787	71 812
EST	21 946	21 771	22 279
EXTREME NORD	77 578	81 344	81 667
LITTORAL	53 641	54 905	57 798
NORD	41 106	45 035	46 468
NORD OUEST	36 692	29 888	30 275
OUEST	40 007	44 226	44 815
SUD	11 432	12 527	12 730
SUD OUEST	24 604	24 700	25 373
SYNTHESE	393 209	404 955	416 063