Evolution of the routine childhood meningococcal immunisation schedule in the UK and Ireland and its impact on clinical burden of invasive meningococcal disease

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**BACKGROUND**

- Invasive meningococcal disease (IMD) is the leading infectious cause of death in early childhood in the UK and Ireland.1,2
- IMD is a notifiable disease in the UK and Ireland and control is a priority for clinical management and public health, and vaccination is the mainstay of IMD prevention.3–6
- Disease monitoring and surveillance have guided the evolution of meningococcal vaccination schedules in the UK and Ireland in response to the changing epidemiology and to protect those most at risk.3,4
- The current meningococcal vaccination schedule for the UK and Ireland can be seen in Table 1.

**OBJECTIVES & METHODS**

- We reviewed publicly available national health surveillance data for the UK and Ireland to understand the evolution of the routine childhood meningococcal immunisation schedules and evaluate their impact on IMD.

**RESULTS**

The evolution of the routine meningococcal vaccine schedule in the UK and Ireland from 1999 to 2018 aligned with the change in the percentage of total confirmed cases of IMD (all ages) by serogroup during this period is shown in Figure 1.

**REFERENCES**

1 Medicago Research Foundation, Meningococcal meningitis and septicaemia: Guidance Notes Diagnosis and Treatment in General Practice. 2018
7 IMD, invasive meningococcal disease; MenB, meningococcal serogroup B; MenACWY, meningococcal serogroups A, C, W, and Y; MenC, meningococcal serogroup C.

**CONCLUSIONS**

- Routine childhood vaccination against IMD in the UK and Ireland has led to significant reductions in clinical burden of this disease.
- High vaccine uptake and continued disease surveillance are crucial to ensure optimum protection and prevention of IMD and enable modification of the schedule should new meningococcal strains emerge.

**ABBREVIATIONS**

- IMD, invasive meningococcal disease
- MenACWY, meningococcal serogroups A, C, W, and Y
- MenB, meningococcal serogroup B
- MenC, meningococcal serogroup C
- MenY, meningococcal serogroup Y

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**CONTACT**

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**TABLE 1. The current UK and Ireland routine meningococcal immunisation schedule (October 2021)³⁴**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>Ireland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 months</td>
<td>MenB</td>
<td>MenB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 months</td>
<td>MenB</td>
<td>MenB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>MenB</td>
<td>MenB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12–13 months</td>
<td>MenC (MenB/MenC)</td>
<td>MenB (MenC/MenB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13–14 years</td>
<td>MenACWY/W</td>
<td>MenACWY/W</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*England and Wales, school Year 9; Northern Ireland, school Year 11; Scotland, school Year 5; Ireland, 1st year of secondary school. Information of the nMoMenC vaccine has been discontinued with supply expected to continue until 2024/2025.

**FIGURE 1. Evolution of the UK routine meningococcal vaccine⁵,¹¹,¹²**

*UK = United Kingdom; Ireland = Republic of Ireland; MenB = meningococcal serogroup B; MenC = meningococcal serogroup C; MenACWY/W = meningococcal serogroups A, C, W, and Y.*

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