BACKGROUND

- High vaccine uptake is crucial to the success of meningococcal vaccination programmes in the UK and Ireland
- National targets for vaccine coverage are ≥95%

OBJECTIVES & METHODS

- We reviewed publicly available vaccine coverage data for the UK and Ireland to understand variation in uptake of routine meningococcal vaccines

RESULTS

Geographical inequalities

- Annual national vaccine coverage rates (VCRs) for routine meningococcal vaccines vary across the UK and Ireland and are generally below 95% (Table 1)
- Hib/MenC and MenB VCRs are highest in Scotland and lowest in England (Table 1)
- MenACWY VCRs during the 2019/2020 school year will have been significantly impacted by school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic
- In England, at the end of August 2019, MenACWY VCRs for the GP-based catch-up cohorts in older adolescents and young adults remained low at ~40% (Table 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>National vaccine coverage rate (VCR)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24 months MenB booster</td>
<td>95% target</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 months MenB primary</td>
<td>95% target</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 years Hib/MenC</td>
<td>95% target</td>
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Table 1. VCR for Hib/MenC and MenB vaccines in the UK (2020/2021) and Ireland (2020), and school-administered MenACWY vaccine in the UK (2019/2020) and GP-based catch-up programme in England (to end August 2019)

Socioeconomic inequalities

- Deprivation is one factor that can influence a parent/guardian’s decision to immunise their child and socioeconomic inequalities in childhood VCRs have been observed in the UK
- In Wales, between 2017/2018 and 2018/2019, socioeconomic inequalities in routine immunisation uptake in 2-5-year-olds widened: in 2018/2019 the proportion of children who were up-to-date with immunisations was higher in the least deprived versus most deprived areas (Table 2)

Table 2. Percentage of children in Wales who had completed routine immunisations by key birthdays* in 2017/2018 compared to 2018/2019, and the difference (inequality gap) in percentage of children who are up to date with routine immunisations

CONCLUSIONS

- Across the UK and Ireland, meningococcal VCRs vary both nationally and locally, and socioeconomic inequalities in coverage also exist
- Variations and inequalities in VCRs may have increased during the COVID-19 pandemic and leave unvaccinated children vulnerable to IMD
- It is important to understand local drivers for low uptake and share best practice initiatives to help underachieving areas improve coverage

REFERENCES


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