

Final Programme

Meningitis Spotlight Session

November 26th, 2024



Hosted in the intervening years to our Meningitis Research Foundation conference, our virtual spotlight session provides the ideal opportunity to discover the very latest in meningitis research, hear from world-renowned speakers and participate in interactive discussions.

This webinar has been approved by the Federation of the Royal Colleges of Physicians of the United Kingdom for 3 category 1 (external) CPD credit(s).

Agenda

13:30-13:35 Welcome and introduction – **Vinny Smith, Meningitis Research Foundation and Confederation of Meningitis Organisations**

Session 1: Real world impact of meningitis – Chair: Dr Nicoline Schiess, World Health Organization

An individual with lived experience sharing their story of the devastating consequences of meningitis, coupled with findings from the National Child Mortality Database report serve as a timely reminder that the time for action is now.

- **13.40-13.50** Patient experience of meningitis – **Deidre Fredericks, CoMO and Meningitis Association of South Africa**
- **13.50-14.10** Meningitis remains a leading cause of infectious death in children and young people in England – **Prof Adam Finn, University of Bristol**

Session 2: Global prevention of bacterial meningitis: where are we now? – Chair: Prof Caroline Trotter, University of Cambridge

The prevention and epidemic control of meningitis is a key strategic pillar of the WHO Global Roadmap to defeat meningitis. Vaccines have successfully reduced the global burden of bacterial meningitis, caused by Hib, pneumococcal and meningococcal bacteria. The UK MenB infant vaccination programme is just one example of a vaccine success story. However, recommended vaccination programmes against some causes of bacterial meningitis have not yet been introduced in many parts of the world, and other important causes of meningitis are not yet vaccine preventable. This session will explore opportunities for global prevention of bacterial meningitis including vaccines currently in development, and future GAVI investment.

- **14.15-14.30** The success of the UK infant MenB vaccination programme – **Dr Helen Campbell, UK-HSA**
- **14.30-14.45** Is the PCV13 1+1 schedule working in the UK? – **Dr Shamez Ladhani, UK-HSA**
- **14.45-15.00** Development of a HiA Vaccine: Phase 1 trial results – **Dr Brian Ward, McGill University, Canada**
- **15.00-15.20** Investing towards a world free of meningitis: What does the GAVI 6.0 strategy mean for meningitis prevention? – **Beth Evans, Gavi Vaccine Alliance**
- **15.20-15.40** Q&A and discussion

15.40-15.55 BREAK

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Agenda - continued

Session 3: The power of genomics: identifying and responding to a recent MenW outbreak, – Chair and moderator: Dr Charlene Rodrigues, LSHTM and UK-HSA

Panellists from around the world will take part in a discussion about the role of whole genome sequencing in identifying and informing response to an outbreak of MenW associated with Umrah travel to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 2024. Panellists will explore how genomic approaches were instrumental in uncovering and tracking MenW cases and the implications for public health practice, including antibiotic prophylaxis and vaccination policy.

15.55-16.10 The role of genomics in decoding a MenW outbreak associated with travel to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia - **Dr Jay Lucidarme, UK-HSA**

16.10-16.15 The importance of travel history in informing outbreak management: the European experience – **Prof Muhamed-Kheir Taha, Institut Pasteur Paris**

16.15-16.20 Responding to the threat of ciprofloxacin resistant meningococcal strains – **Dr Lucy McNamara, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

16.20-16.25 Uncovering secondary MenW cases: the experience of community spread in Canada – **Dr Raymond Tsang, Public Health Agency of Canada**

16.25-16.35 Vaccination recommendations for pilgrims travelling to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia – **Prof Ziad Memish, College of Medicine, Alfaisal University, Saudi Arabia**

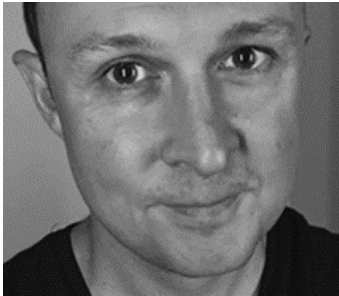
16.35-16.55 Group discussion and Q&A

17.00 CLOSE

This webinar series has been made possible thanks to support from GSK, Pfizer and Wellcome. This series is operated independently; GSK, Pfizer and Wellcome have no editorial control over its content.



Speaker and Chair biographies:



Vinny Smith is the Chief Executive of the Meningitis Research Foundation (MRF) and Confederation of Meningitis Organisations (CoMO), with 20 years of experience enabling transformation of organisations and sectors. In the past 9 years, Vinny has helped establish the world's first World Health Organization (WHO) global roadmap for meningitis, the Global Meningitis Genome Partnership, and the Meningitis Progress Tracker, bringing together the world's best data on bacterial meningitis into one place for the first time, and he merged MRF and CoMO to establish the world's leading combined meningitis charity and patient voice network.



Dr Nicoline Schiess is an adult neurologist and technical officer working in the Brain Health Unit in the Department of Mental Health and Substance Use at the World Health Organization. In this role Dr. Schiess serves as the point person for adult neurological disorders as well as assists in the implementation of the Intersectoral global action plan on epilepsy and other neurological disorders, a global plan of action for neurological disorders. Prior to WHO she worked at Johns Hopkins University specializing in neuroimmunology/neuroinfectious diseases and global neurology. She has worked internationally treating patients and conducting epidemiologic and clinical research as well as having directed and taught neuroscience and neurology courses internationally.



Deidre Fredericks is a passionate educator originally from South Africa, now living in China where she has spent the last six years teaching English to young children. With a background as both a qualified accountant and teacher, she brings a diverse skill set to her role in the classroom. As a mother of two, she values a balanced lifestyle that combines her professional pursuits with her love for her family. 14 years ago, after the heartbreaking loss of her 3-year-old daughter to meningitis, Deidre founded the Meningitis Association of South Africa to raise awareness and support others affected by the disease.



Professor Adam Finn is Professor of Paediatrics at the University of Bristol, UK. He studied Medical Sciences at Cambridge University and then moved to University of Oxford Medical School to complete his clinical degree in 1983. In 1992, he took up a senior lecturer position at the University of Sheffield, UK. In 2001, he moved to Bristol where he heads the Bristol Children's Vaccine Centre. He was Chairman of the WHO European Technical Advisory Group of Experts (ETAGE) on Immunization from 2011 until 2022 and remains a member of the WHO Strategic Advisory Group of Experts COVID-19 vaccine working group. He was a member of the UK Department of Health Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) from 2014 to 2024 and remains a member of their RSV, Varicella and Pneumococcal sub-committees.



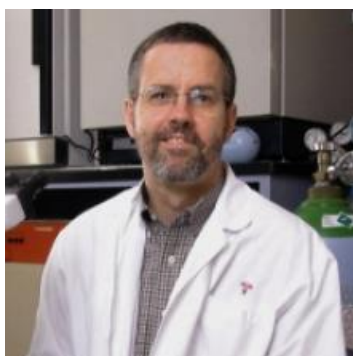
Professor Caroline Trotter is an infectious disease epidemiologist with over 20 years of experience in researching vaccine-preventable diseases. She is currently Professor of Global Health at the University of Cambridge and Director of the Vaccine Impact Modelling Consortium at Imperial College, London. She is a member of the UK Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation and a member of the WHO Technical Taskforce for Defeating Meningitis by 2030.



Dr Helen Campbell is a Lead Clinical Scientist who joined the UK Health security Agency in 2001 after working as a Senior Scientist at the Department of Health and as consultant research manager for Health Promotion England. She is the scientific lead on national epidemiology of invasive meningococcal disease and pertussis, additionally leading on UKHSA co-ordinated surveillance of inadvertent vaccination of pregnant women and pregnancy vaccination programmes, including COVID-19 and pertussis vaccines. She provides scientific support for national surveys of attitudes to immunisation. The development of parental resources and health professional training materials together with teaching on public health courses are also important areas of her work.



Dr Shamez Ladhani is a paediatric infectious diseases specialist at St. George's Hospital, a reader in paediatric infectious diseases at St. George's University of London and consultant epidemiologist at UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA). He is the clinical lead for a number of national vaccine preventable infections, including *Haemophilus influenzae*, *Streptococcus pneumoniae* and *Neisseria meningitidis*. He completed his medical training at Guy's and St. Thomas's Hospitals, London and then worked in a children's hospital in rural Kenya. He obtained his PhD in genetic epidemiology and vaccine failure in children and completed his specialist paediatric infectious diseases training at St. George's and Great Ormond Street Hospitals, London.



Dr Brian Ward trained in adult infectious diseases, microbiology and tropical medicine at McGill, Oxford, London and Johns Hopkins. At McGill since 1991, he has served as director of the Vaccine Study Center, co-director of the JD MacLean Tropical Diseases Centre and director of the National Reference Center for Parasitology. Current research is focused on development of vaccines produced in plants. Numerous honours/awards including a Rhodes scholarship (1977), US Secretary of Defense – Exceptional Public Service Award (2003) and the Quebec Innovation Prize: Vaccine Development (2020). Elected to the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences in 2012, with more than 310 peer-reviewed publications.



Beth Evans is the Senior Programme Manager for Yellow Fever, Meningitis, and Japanese Encephalitis at Gavi, the vaccine alliance. In this capacity, Beth supports Gavi-eligible countries with vaccine introductions, campaigns, and outbreak response. She previously worked as a management consultant at McKinsey; then as Programme Manager, Global Vaccines at the Clinton Health Access Initiative – primarily across the Asia Pacific region. They hold a BA in Natural Sciences (Biological) from the University of Cambridge, an MSc in Public Health for Development from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and are completing a PhD in epidemiology at the University of Geneva.



Dr Charlene Rodrigues is a clinical academic, based at LSHTM studying microbial genomics, working as a paediatric infectious disease's consultant at St Mary's Hospital, London and a genomics consultant at UK Health Security Agency. Charlene undertook a Wellcome Trust funded DPhil in genomic epidemiology (University of Oxford, 2015-18), studying meningococcal vaccine antigens, developing genomic typing tools and performing national UK genomic surveillance. Charlene's research focuses on the use of microbial genomics and its application to clinical and public health practice. She works to better integrate genomics into healthcare settings to ensure accessibility to clinicians, microbiologists and epidemiologists to improve patient care.



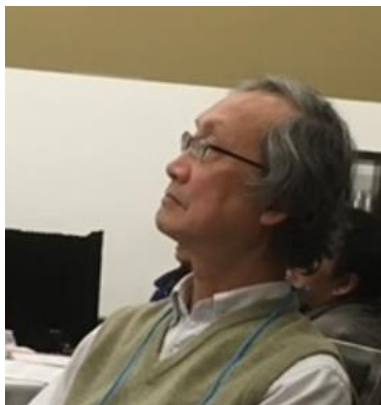
Dr Jay Lucidarme is a Senior Scientist based at the UK Health Security Agency Meningococcal Reference Unit in Manchester. He obtained his degree in Microbiology at the University of Sheffield before going on to complete a Master's in Medical and Molecular Microbiology at the University of Manchester. He joined the UKHSA Vaccine Evaluation Unit in 2007 where he undertook a PhD in Genomic Epidemiology assessing the potential coverage of the meningococcal B vaccine, Bexsero, in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. He currently contributes to the enhanced surveillance of invasive meningococcal disease in England, Wales and Northern Ireland following the introduction of meningococcal B and meningococcal ACWY vaccines into the routine vaccine schedule.



Professor Muhamed-Kheir Taha is Professor at Institut Pasteur in Paris France, Invasive bacterial infection Unit, Head of the Unit Invasive bacterial infections, the French National Reference Centre for Meningococci and Haemophilus influenzae, and the WHO collaborating centre for meningitis, and is the current President of The European Meningococcal and Haemophilus Disease Society (EMGM). Prof Taha's research works focus on the molecular pathogenesis of Neisseria meningitidis and Haemophilus influenzae as well as on the molecular epidemiology of meningococcal and H. influenzae infections.



Dr Lucy McNamara is an Epidemiologist and leads the Bacterial Meningitis Epidemiology Team at the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. She works on meningococcal disease epidemiology, surveillance, and vaccination in the US and globally. Dr. McNamara has also contributed to public health emergency responses including for the 2014 West Africa Ebola Epidemic and the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. McNamara received her BA in Biology from Swarthmore College in 2008 and a PhD in Microbiology and Immunology and MS in Epidemiology from the University of Michigan in 2012. She completed the Epidemic Intelligence Service at CDC in 2013–2015.



Dr Raymond S.W. Tsang is Chief of the Laboratory for Syphilis Diagnostics and Vaccine Preventable Bacterial Diseases at the National Microbiology Laboratory Branch of the Public Health Agency of Canada. His laboratory provides reference diagnostic services to provincial and territorial public health laboratories and hospitals. He has extensive experience in clinical microbiology, especially bacterial diseases, immune response to bacterial infection, laboratory diagnostic methods, and genomic epidemiology. He also serves as a subject matter expert for the Public Health Agency of Canada on meningococcal disease, Haemophilus influenzae, and pertussis. He currently serves as an Editor for The Canadian Journal of Microbiology.



Dr Ziad Memish is currently a senior consultant in infectious diseases and Advisor to HE, the Supervisor General of KSrelief for Medical & Humanitarian Research. Professor at the College of Medicine in Alfaisal University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; and Adjunct Professor in the Hubert Department of Global Health, Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University, Georgia, USA. Professor Memish obtained his MD from the University of Ottawa, Canada, in 1987 and is Board certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine, the American Board of Infectious Diseases as well as a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians (Canada, Edinburgh, and London) and the American College of Physicians