

‘No Jab No Pay’ drives adolescent measles vaccination catch-up

A new report from the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS) shows that over 43,000 10- to 19-year olds received a catch-up second dose of measles-containing vaccine in 2016, most of these likely actioned as a result of the federal government’s ‘No Jab No Pay’ policy.

This report is the first look at catch-up vaccination in adolescents since the introduction of the federal government’s ‘No Jab No Pay’ policy on 1 January 2016.¹ Data from the newly expanded national immunisation register was used for this analysis.

The report also found the proportion of children fully immunised at 1 and 5 years of age had reached the highest levels ever recorded in mid-2016 (at 93.9% and 93.5% respectively), likely due, in part, to the introduction of the ‘No Jab No Pay’ policy.

Dr Frank Beard, public health physician, and head of coverage and surveillance at NCIRS, described the level of measles vaccination catch-up in adolescents and improved immunisation rates in younger children as important outcomes.

“While Australia has been certified free of local measles, we need to maintain high immunisation rates as we are constantly at threat from measles coming into the country from overseas and spreading locally,” he said.

“Measles catch-up vaccination in adolescents is particularly important, as recent outbreaks have disproportionately affected this age group due to inadequate vaccination,” he added.

In the 2012 measles outbreak, the largest in Australia since 1997 (168 cases) arising as a result of a traveller returning from Thailand with measles,² the 10- to 19-year-old age group was over-represented, accounting for almost one third of cases.

The NCIRS report complements the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare “Healthy Communities” reports on immunisation rates at local area level, also released on Thursday, by highlighting whether vaccines are given on time, and the uptake of specific vaccines, including those given only to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. The report also shows trends in the numbers of children with a registered medical vaccination exemption.

The 2016 NCIRS Annual Immunisation Coverage report is available at <http://bit.ly/NCIRSCoverage>

The AIHW ‘Immunisation rates for children 2016–17’ and ‘HPV immunisation rates 2015–16’ reports are available at <http://bit.ly/AIHWreports>

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¹[http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/internet/immunise/publishing.nsf/Content/375B788BBCB7EC0FCA257F110017177E/\\$File/No-Jab-No-Pay-FSheet.pdf](http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/internet/immunise/publishing.nsf/Content/375B788BBCB7EC0FCA257F110017177E/$File/No-Jab-No-Pay-FSheet.pdf)

²<http://ojs.wpro.who.int/ojs/index.php/wpsar/article/view/220/370>