

Fortnightly Media Analysis Report – 16 - 31 July 2024

During the fortnight from **July 16 to 31, 2024**, media tracking focused on the online editions of mainstream newspapers and various news portals, highlighting a range of health-related topics such as Routine Immunization (RI), vaccine-preventable diseases, Measles and Rubella Elimination, Polio, HPV, Td, and AEFI.

A total of 139 news articles were found across English and Hindi news portals, offering insights from both national and international perspectives. These articles presented diverse viewpoints, encompassing positive, neutral, and multi-perspective stances on RI efforts.

Notably, approximately 58.2% of the coverage portrayed RI efforts positively. However, specific cases like JE claiming 10 lives in Guwahati, two deaths in a measles outbreak in Bosnia, and measles outbreaks hitting 103 countries received attention, though they comprised only 1.15% of the overall coverage.

Reflection of News stories on Immunization during the fortnight (16 - 31 July 2024)-at a glance

Name of Publication	Positive	Mixed (Multi-perspective)	Negative	Remark	Subject Covered
Times of India - 11	7	3	1	Two die in measles outbreak in Bosnia	Polio, Hepatitis, MR, Mumps, zero dose, Measles
Hindustan Times - 1	1				HPV
Indian Express - 9	7	2			Polio, Uwin, zero dose, health budget, childhood immunization, Hepatitis,
The Hindu - 8	5	3			Polio, vaccination, zero dose, JE, Immunization, health budget
The Week - 1	1				Health Budget
Deccan Herald - 2	1	1			Immunization, HPV
Business Standard -5	2	3			Immunization, zero dose, vaccination, Uwin
Economic Times - 3		2	1	JE has claimed 10 lives at the Guwahati	zero dose, JE
India Today -3	2	1			Malaria vaccine, Immunization, Polio
First Post -1	1				Vaccination
Dainik Bhaskar - 10	7	3			Zero dose, RI, HPV, UIP, Cervical cancer
Prabhat Khabar - 2	1	1			Rotavirus, BCG
Hindustan Hindi - 4	3	1			Uwin, PHC, RI, HPV
Navbharat Times - 1		1			Vaccination
Dainik jagran - 1	1				Immunization
The Guardian -1		1			Polio
The Telegraph - 1	1				HPV
BBC - 3	1	2			Polio, whooping cough, vaccine
Reuter -1		1			Polio
Al-Jazeera -1		1			Malaria
Gavi - 5	3	2			Whooping cough, immunization, Vaccine, HCW, Measles
WHO - 6	5	1			MR, Immunization, Hep-B, EPI, VPD, HIV, RI
UNICEF - 8	3	5			Zero dose, polio, Immunization, vaccination, childhood diseases,
CDC -1		1			whooping cough,
Other web portal - 50	29	20	1	measles outbreaks have hit 103 countries	Hepatitis, VPD, Nipah, whoping cough, immunization, BCG, Health budget, vaccination, cervical cancer, zero dose, polio, DPT, RI, Measles, JE, MMR, TD, Adult vaccination,

Important stories with highlights

The Times of India reports that Biological E Limited has received World Health Organisation (WHO) pre-qualification status for its novel next-generation live, attenuated oral polio vaccine type 2 (nOPV2). According to Biological E, the vaccine significantly reduces the risk of circulating vaccine-derived Poliovirus type 2 (cVDPV2) and is intended for immunization in countries affected by cVDPV2 outbreaks. "With its improved genetic stability, nOPV2 has a decreased chance of causing new outbreaks in low-immunity environments compared to its predecessor," stated Biological E. Extensive clinical trials have rigorously evaluated nOPV2's safety and immunogenicity, with promising results published in the prestigious journal *The Lancet* (2019-2024).

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<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/hyderabad/biological-es-nopv2-oral-polio-vaccine-receives-who-prequalification/articleshowprint/112150809.cms>

The Times of India reports in world news that the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF have urged Bosnia's authorities to increase the measles vaccination rate among children after two adolescents died in a recent outbreak of the highly infectious respiratory illness. Bosnia has the highest number of measles infections in the Balkans, with over 7,000 estimated cases since the first outbreak last December. In comparison, neighboring Montenegro has only eight cases. Bosnia's national immunization rate for measles stands at just 55%, compared to 90% in neighboring Croatia. "There is no clearer sign of a breakdown in immunization coverage than an increase in measles cases," stated Erwin Cooreman, the WHO's special representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/rest-of-world/un-agencies-urge-bosnia-to-vaccinate-kids-after-two-die-in-measles-outbreak/articleshowprint/111968478.cms>

The Indian Express, in its opinion editorials, states that despite the challenges, India's Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP) remains a major public health success story globally. With the government planning to launch a digital vaccination registry, U-Win, on August 15, the UIP is set to become even more effective. The portal will facilitate the inoculation of 29 million pregnant women and 26 million infants annually against vaccine-preventable diseases. Currently, inoculation data is manually recorded by ASHA workers and then collated in state and national-level registries, a process that typically takes over a month. Immunization data from private healthcare facilities is often not recorded. U-Win aims to capture every vaccination event, ensuring real-time availability of vaccination data to healthcare policymakers. This enhanced information flow could improve planning and lead to more responsive interventions to avert outbreaks.

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<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/editorials/u-win-all-win-a-game-changer-9462303/>

The Hindu reports in Health news that official sources have pointed out that India's large population was not taken into account when comparing children's vaccination data with 19 other countries in the latest WHO and UNICEF estimates of national immunization coverage (WUENIC). They emphasized India's strong commitment to reducing the number of zero-dose children. "Although India has the second highest number of zero-dose children globally, it represents only 0.11% of the country's total population," Union Health Ministry sources stated. These comments were in response to the WUENIC data released, which indicated that India had nearly 16 lakh children who did not receive any vaccine in 2023, second only to Nigeria, which had 21 lakh zero-dose children.

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<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/zero-dose-children-comparison-flawed-indias-population-not-considered-sources-on-who-unicef-data/article68413057.ece>

The Economic Times reports that amidst the ongoing flood situation in Assam, Japanese Encephalitis (JE), a vector-borne disease, has claimed 10 lives at Guwahati Medical College and Hospital (GMCH) this year. Dr. Abhijit Sarma, Superintendent of GMCH, stated that since April 1, 44 cases of JE have been reported at the hospital, with 10 resulting in fatalities. "Since April 1 this year, 44 cases of JE have been registered. 25 patients are currently receiving treatment. Unfortunately, we lost 4 patients yesterday, bringing the total to 10 deaths so far. The remaining patients are recovering well, and I believe we will be able to discharge them soon. Last year, we had 54 cases of the disease," Dr. Sarma said. He also emphasized the importance of preventive measures and raising awareness among the public.

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<https://www.msn.com/en-in/health/health-news/assam-japanese-encephalitis-claims-10-lives-at-guwahati-medical-college-and-hospital-this-year/ar-BB1qsbaN>

The Press Information Bureau (PIB) issued a press release stating that media reports highlighting the high number of 'zero dose children' in India paint an incomplete picture of the country's immunization efforts. These reports fail to account for India's large population and high vaccination coverage. Zero dose children constitute only 0.11% of the total population. Despite its large population, India has the highest number of vaccinated children. For the fiscal year 2023-24, the country's full immunization coverage stands at 93.23%. India's Immunization Programme is the largest public health initiative globally, targeting 2.6 crore children and 2.9 crore pregnant women annually through 1.2 crore vaccination sessions. Under Mission Indradhanush, 5.46 crore children and 1.32 crore pregnant women have been vaccinated as of 2023.

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<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=2034080>

BBC News reports that the World Health Organization (WHO) is "extremely worried" about the potential outbreak of the highly infectious polio virus in Gaza after traces were detected in wastewater. Dr. Ayadil Saparbekov, head of the WHO's team in the Palestinian territories, informed reporters that a risk assessment is underway. In the meantime, health workers are advising Gaza's 2.3 million residents on protection measures. However, Dr. Saparbekov noted that it would be "very difficult" for people to adhere to these measures due to the breakdown of water and sanitation services. Traces of polio, which spreads through fecal matter, were found in sewage samples from two sites in Gaza a month ago, suggesting possible circulation. No paralytic cases have been reported so far. The Israeli military announced on Sunday that it had begun vaccinating its soldiers. The WHO and UNICEF believe that a mass vaccination campaign may be necessary in Gaza.

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<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/crgxjn9rkpo>

Precision Vaccinations News reports that new data released by the World Health Organization (WHO) today reveal that measles outbreaks have affected 103 countries over the past five years. In 2023, nearly 35 million children had no or only partial measles protection. The U.S. CDC's July 2024 report lists Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Iraq, and India as leading the top ten international measles outbreaks. In the United States, 167 measles cases have been reported across 24 jurisdictions this year. On July 15, 2024, the WHO confirmed that only 83% of children worldwide received their first dose of the measles vaccine through routine health services, and only 74% received their second dose. These figures fall short of the 95% coverage needed to prevent measles outbreaks.

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<https://www.precisionvaccinations.com/2024/07/15/103-countries-confirm-measles-outbreaks-over-five-years>