

Fortnightly Media Analysis Report – 17 - 31 August 2024

During the fortnight from **August 17 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 134 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 52.9% of the coverage portrayed RI efforts positively. However, specific cases like students fallen ill and hospitalized after JE vaccination, Infant deaths post immunisation in CG and measles and whooping cough outbreaks across countries received attention, though they comprised only 2.23% of the overall coverage.

On the other hand, 44.7% of the coverage maintained a neutral or multi-perspective approach. Overall, the news regarding immunization, policy perspectives, and efforts by stakeholders resonated with the general news media landscape.

Reflection of News stories on Immunization during the fortnight (17 - 31 Aug 2024)-at a glance

Name of Publication	Positive	Mixed (Multi-perspective)	Negative	Remark	Subject Covered
Times of India - 9	4	4	1	6 students hospitalized after vaccination	Td, Polio, mpox, JE, TB, Covid
Hindustan Times - 5	2	3			Polio, VDP, Hep B, Immunization, DPT, AEFI
Indian Express - 3	1	2			Vaccination, Polio,
The Hindu - 8	3	5			Polio, VDP, outbreak, cholera
Deccan Herald - 2		1	1	Infant deaths post immunisation	vaccination, mpox
Business standard -3	1	2			mpox, DPT, Vaccine
Times Now -1		1			Hepatitis
The Print - 2	1	1			Polio, Vaccine
Dainik Bhaskar - 11	9	2			Diphtheria, JE, BCG, Uwin, Td, Vaccination centre, HPV, Immunization
Hindustan Hindi - 12	6	5	1	10 children fall ill after JE vaccination	Full immunization, Polio, JE, immunization centre, Vaccination, Diphtheria
Amar Ujala -7	3	4			Diphtheria, JE, HPV, Rota, vaccination centre
International News					
The Guardian -2		2			Polio, Measles
The Nature - 1	1				HPV
BBC - 5	1	4			Measles, Polio, vaccine, immunization
CNN - 2		2			Polio, outbreak
Newyork Times - 3		3			Polio, whooping cough,
The Telegraph -2	2				IPV, Polio
Relief Web -3	3				EPI, Immunization, Vaccination
Forbes -1		1			Polio
ALJazeera -1		1			Polio
The Lancet		1			mpox
Gavi - 3	3				Immunization, Polio survivor, health coverage
WHO - 3	3				Vaccination, HPV, Immunization
UNICEF - 3	3				Polio, Immunization, VPD
Other web portal - 41	25	16			Adult vaccination, MMR, whooping cough, MR, Malaria, Pertusis, chikanguniya, HepB, DTF, cervical cancer, zero dose, polio, measles, Immunization, vaccinology, HPV, Diphtheria, MAS, Rotavirus

Important stories with highlights

Times of India published an article by Dr. Atul Goel, Director General of Health Services in the Union Health Ministry, which discussed the recent surge in Mpox cases and the associated risks in India. Dr. Goel shared that Mpox, a viral illness, is generally self-limiting, with most patients recovering fully within 2-4 weeks with appropriate supportive care. The few deaths reported have typically occurred in individuals with underlying health conditions or due to secondary infections resulting from inadequate care.

Dr. Goel emphasized that, unlike influenza or Covid-19, Mpox is not airborne. The virus primarily spreads through close physical contact with an infected person, particularly unprotected contact. Sexual transmission is also a significant mode of spread. Additionally, the infection can be transmitted through contact with infected materials, such as blisters and scabs from the patient. Therefore, maintaining proper hygiene is crucial. Transmission can also occur if caregivers do not use personal protective measures.

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<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/health-fitness/health-news/risk-of-mpox-outbreak-low-in-india-but-were-prepared/articleshowprint/112662120.cms>

The Hindu, in its national news section, reported that a case of vaccine-derived polio has been confirmed in a two-year-old child from Tikrikilla in Meghalaya. A senior official from the Union Health Ministry clarified that this was not a case of wild polio but rather an infection that could occur in individuals with low immunity.

India was declared polio-free by the World Health Organisation in 2014, following the last reported case of wild poliovirus in 2011. However, officials in Meghalaya's West Garo Hills district were now on high alert reported the newspaper.

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<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/centre-says-meghalaya-polio-case-is-vaccine-derived/article68547351.ece>

Indian Express, in its world news section, reported that nearly 2.7 million children in the Southeast Asia Region did not receive any vaccines, while another 0.6 million were only partially vaccinated in 2023, quoting WHO. The information was shared during the 15th Meeting of the WHO South-East Asia Regional Immunization Technical Advisory Group.

In response, the WHO urged countries in the region to intensify efforts to ensure that all children are protected through life-saving vaccines offered under the childhood immunisation programme. The focus should be on reaching those who have missed some or all vaccine doses, as well as on protecting adolescent girls from cervical cancer.

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<https://www.newindianexpress.com/world/2024/Aug/21/who-asks-southeast-asian-countries-to-accelerate-action-to-protect-children-with-life-saving-vaccine>

Times Now, in its health section, reported a concerning rise in hepatitis cases in India. According to the latest data from the National Viral Hepatitis Control Program (NVHCP), there has been a 20% increase in hepatitis cases among children over the past five years. In 2023 alone, more than 50,000 new cases were reported in children under the age of 15.

Despite that vaccines were available for hepatitis B, commented the story, the demand for vaccination remained low, especially in rural and underserved areas.

A study published in The Lancet Infectious Diseases emphasized the severity of the situation, noting that hepatitis B and C accounted for nearly 1.5 million deaths annually, surpassing the mortality rates of HIV and tuberculosis.

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<https://www.timesnownews.com/health/hepatitis-cases-on-rise-among-children-deadlier-than-hiv-and-tuberculosis-article-112842607>

The Telegraph India reported that an Indian paediatric virologist, T. Jacob John, has urged the World Health Organisation (WHO) to adopt a global policy shift towards exclusive use of the injectable polio vaccine (IPV) and discontinue the use of the oral polio vaccine (OPV). In an open letter to WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Dr. John emphasized that such a change is necessary to ensure equity in global health.

He criticized the current situation, where the safer yet more expensive IPV had become a "rich-country vaccine," leaving low-income nations reliant on the more affordable but riskier OPV. Dr. John stated that WHO, as a global public health leader, has "knowingly created an inequitable world where poverty is punished with polio caused by vaccine-derived polioviruses (VDPVs)."

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<https://www.telegraphindia.com/india/world-health-organisation-asked-to-switch-fully-to-injectable-polio-vaccine-from-oral-polio-vaccine/cid/2042634>

Prabhat Khabar in its Hindi edition reports from Bihar that vaccination is a process that offers lifelong protection, not only safeguarding individuals from diseases but also preventing the spread of illnesses within society. Timely vaccination of pregnant women and children is crucial for shielding them from various serious diseases. To ensure beneficiaries receive their vaccinations on time, the Health Department has launched a new digital initiative. Under this program, all information regarding the vaccination of pregnant women and children will now be recorded entirely online. The "UWin" portal and application aim to simplify the vaccination process while also making it more transparent and accessible to the public.

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<https://www.prabhatkhabar.com/state/bihar/kishanganj/vaccination-is-being-registered-on-the-portal-certificate>

The New York Times published an article in the Middle East crisis section reporting that United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres called for a weeklong cease-fire in Gaza to facilitate vaccinations and prevent a potential polio outbreak, emphasizing the high risk to many children. His appeal came just hours before the Gaza health ministry confirmed the first polio case in the enclave in many years. "Preventing and containing the spread of polio will require a massive, coordinated, and urgent effort," Mr. Guterres stated, adding, "It is impossible to conduct a polio vaccination campaign with war raging all around." He also cautioned that if not swiftly contained, the disease could spread to neighbouring countries.

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<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/16/world/middleeast/gaza-polio-crisis.html>

BBC reported that health officials in England were urging parents to ensure their children were up to date with any missed vaccinations before the new school term began. There is a concern that the highly contagious measles virus, which can be very serious for some children, could see a rise in cases when schools reopen. While the uptake of the MMR vaccine—protecting against measles, mumps, and rubella—has improved in many areas following outbreaks last year, health experts stress that more progress is needed. Additionally, children can be safeguarded against other serious diseases, including whooping cough, meningitis, diphtheria, and polio.

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<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c9wjx781ngzo>