

WHA11.54 Smallpox Eradication

The Eleventh World Health Assembly,

Noting that smallpox still remains a very widespread and dangerous infectious disease and that in many regions of the world there exist endemic foci of this disease constituting a permanent threat of its propagation and consequently menacing the life and health of the population;

Having regard to the economic aspect of the question, which shows that the funds devoted to the control of and vaccination against smallpox throughout the world exceed those necessary for the eradication of smallpox in its endemic foci and consequently the destruction of the sources from which the infection arises and spreads, and clearly indicates that the eradication of smallpox might in future make vaccination and all expenditures involved in its application redundant; ²

Taking into account the level of development reached by medical science and the health services in the control of infectious diseases, and in particular of smallpox, and the manifest tendency of the morbidity of smallpox to diminish in recent years;

Having regard to the decisions and pertinent practical measures adopted by WHO for smallpox control and the intensification of antismallpox programmes, in particular resolutions WHA3.18, EB11.R58, WHA6.18, EB12.R13, EB13.R3, WHA7.5, WHA8.38 and WHA9.49; and

Considering it opportune to raise the problem of the world-wide eradication of smallpox in the near future,

1. REQUESTS the Director-General to study and report to the Executive Board at its twenty-third session on the financial, administrative and technical implications of a programme having as its objective the eradication of smallpox, the study to include the various problems involved in carrying out the following activities :

- (a) investigation of the means of ensuring the world-wide eradication of smallpox, taking into account the fact that smallpox persists in certain areas despite repeated vaccination campaigns;
- (b) encouragement of the preparation during 1958-1960 of the necessary amount of smallpox vaccine in national laboratories and institutes;
- (c) training of vaccinators among the local population in countries in which mass immunization campaigns will be conducted;
- (d) the pooling of experience and the formulation of recommendations for the production of a sufficient amount of thermostable smallpox vaccine suitable for prolonged storage and use in tropical and subtropical regions of the world, and
- (e) study of the measures to be taken in order to avoid complications which might result from smallpox vaccination;

2. RECOMMENDS to all governments :

- (a) that during 1959-1960 the population be vaccinated in countries in which principal endemic foci of smallpox exist; and
- (b) that during 1961-1962 additional vaccination of the population should be carried out in foci where the disease persists, and that subsequently revaccinations be given to the extent it becomes necessary in accordance with the experience acquired in each country;

3. RECOMMENDS that all countries in which smallpox vaccination is compulsory continue to give smallpox vaccinations during the eradication of this disease throughout the world;

4. CALLS upon medical scientists and scientific institutions active in the field of microbiology and epidemiology to stimulate their efforts towards improving the quality and the technology of the production of satisfactory smallpox vaccine resistant to the influence of temperature; and

5. REQUESTS the Director-General to report to the Twelfth World Health Assembly on the progress made and the results obtained.