This issue contains information about the introduction of a new shingles vaccination programme and on the seasonal influenza vaccination programme for 2013/14.

Shingles vaccination programme announced

The Scottish Government announced the introduction of a new vaccination programme against shingles in their letter of 13 August 2013, available at http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/cmo/CMO(2013)15.pdf. Shingles is a debilitating condition, which occurs more frequently and tends to be more severe in older people. It is estimated that around 7,000 people aged 70 years and above are affected in Scotland each year. Of these, between 700-1,400 develop a very painful and long lasting condition - Post Herpetic Neuralgia (PHN). Around 600 hospitalisation episodes are recorded per year, with approximately 5 cases resulting in death each year.

The programme will begin from 1 September 2013 and will become a part of the routine vaccination programme for people aged 70. A catch-up campaign for those aged 79 will also begin from 1 September 2013.

- The routine cohort for those aged 70 in 2013/14 is defined by the patient's age on 1 September 2013. Those born between 2 September 1942 and 1 September 1943 should be offered the vaccine in the 2013/14 routine programme.
- The catch-up cohort for those aged 79 in 2013/14 is defined by the patient’s age on 1 September 2013. Those born between 2 September 1933 and 1 September 1934 should be offered vaccine in the 2013/14 catch-up programme.

The vaccine used will be Zostavax®. It is a live attenuated vaccine (a weakened form of virus which cannot cause disease but which protects against shingles). Adults should receive a single 0.65ml dose of Zostavax®, which should be administered by subcutaneous injection. It should not be given by intramuscular injection.

Zostavax® should be ordered through NHS Board vaccine holding centres using the ordering system required by each NHS Board. GP practices and vaccine holding centres must liaise closely to ensure sufficient vaccine availability prior to the scheduling of immunisation appointments.

Zostavax® can be given at the same time as inactivated influenza vaccinations. If given at the same time as influenza vaccinations, care should be taken to ensure that the appropriate route of injection is used for both vaccinations and to check there are no contraindications to administering a live vaccine to individuals in at risk groups presenting for seasonal influenza vaccination.

Despite the advice in the Summary of Product Characteristics (SmPC), new evidence suggests that Zostavax® can also be given at the same time as 23 valent pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPV23) for those who are eligible for both vaccines.

A new Green Book chapter on shingles, including clinical advice and information about the vaccine has been included in Immunisation against infectious disease 2006 (‘the Green Book’), available to read at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/shingles-herpes-zoster-the-green-book-chapter-28a


The public information leaflet “Aged 70 or 79 Protect yourself against shingles” will be available on the Immunisation Scotland website at http://www.immunisationscotland.org.uk/index.aspx
Seasonal Influenza Immunisation Programme 2013/14


The key points of note are as follows:

- Uptake targets for 65 years and above group and the under 65 at-risk population will remain at 75%, in line with national and international targets.
- All pregnant women, at any stage of pregnancy, remain eligible for vaccination
- The list of clinical risk groups has not changed.

The seasonal flu programme for 2013-14 will commence on 1 October 2013 and run until the end of the season, however vaccination can begin before this date should the vaccine become available earlier (as can sometimes be the case). Planning for vaccination early in the season is important to ensure that as many of the at-risk population as possible can be protected before viruses begin circulating. Although uptake rates have improved in recent years, a significant proportion of individuals are not being vaccinated until late in the season and after influenza viruses are circulating. The aim should be to get as many people as possible vaccinated in October and November as the vaccine becomes available.

Community pharmacy contractors are the main source of flu vaccine to GP Practices, and practices need to keep in regular contact with the community pharmacist who has placed orders on their behalf rather than contacting manufacturers directly. Throughout the flu season it is important that GP practices and community pharmacists continue to liaise closely to manage supply and distribution of vaccine stock and to ensure vaccine availability and sufficient stock is guaranteed prior to the scheduling of clinics.

The updated Green Book chapter has still to be published. Public Health England aim to publish the updated chapter on their website shortly and the updated information will be included in the next issue of Scottish Vaccine Update.

This year, the Scottish Government will deliver a refreshed national marketing and awareness raising campaign to at risk groups to promote uptake of the vaccine. It is anticipated that the programme will commence at the same time as the vaccination programme is launched in early October 2013. NHS Health Scotland is responsible for the printing and distribution of the seasonal flu marketing materials, which will be distributed in early September to ensure that colleagues have enough time to display information and to prepare for the programme.

Whilst last season the influenza activity was low, we cannot assume that this will be the case this year due to the unpredictable nature of the virus and its ability to change. This season two of the three antigens within the influenza vaccine have been changed to reflect this challenge. We therefore, need to ensure that as many people as possible are immunised this year to ensure we are able to provide the best protection, particularly to those most at risk.

Extension of the flu immunisation programme to children

In addition to the groups outlined in the seasonal influenza programme CMO letter, the following groups of children will also be offered vaccination during the 2013/14 season:

- All children aged 2 and 3 years old on 1 September 2013 will be offered vaccination by their GP; and
- From this year’s flu season, there will also be a pilot for primary school aged children, involving a combination of single primary school year cohorts and a proportion of whole primary schools in agreed NHS Board areas, as agreed with each NHS Board.

A further letter providing details of the extension to the programme will be issued within the next few weeks and the information will be included in the next issue of Scottish Vaccine Update.

Green Book Updates

Vaccine Supply

MenC vaccines
Currently both Meningitec® and NeisVac-C® are available to order for the childhood programme. In infants, Meningitec® should only be used as a second dose for those who received Meningitec® at three months of age prior to 1 June 2013. All other infants should receive NeisVac-C® or any remaining stock of Menjugate® as the single MenC dose at three months.


Hepatyrix® - hepatitis A and typhoid vaccine
The following information regarding the availability in the UK of Hepatyrix® has been supplied by GSK. GSK is now out of stock of Hepatyrix®. It is anticipated that Hepatyrix® will be available from Q4 2014. This supply constraint is due to the establishment and accreditation of a new manufacturing facility and is not related to either a quality or safety issue with the vaccines.

Vivotif®
Janssen-Cilag Ltd currently has limited stock of their oral typhoid vaccine, Vivotif®. Supplies are expected to return to normal by early September.

Typhim Vi®
Sanofi Pasteur MSD has limited stock of their typhoid vaccine, Typhim Vi®. They are unable to accept new orders at this time and will provide an update as soon as further information is available.

Quadrivalent Meningococcal Vaccine (ACWY Vax®)
GSK has announced an interruption to the supply of ACWY Vax® (capsular polysaccharide vaccine). It is due to go out of stock in September 2013 and will not be back in stock before January 2014.

Both Menveo® and Nimenrix® brands of quadrivalent conjugate meningococcal vaccines are in normal supply.

The JCVI recommends that in children and adults, ACWY conjugate vaccine should be used in preference to the polysaccharide vaccine to reduce the risk of hyporesponsiveness and to provide better protection. See Green Book -Meningococcal chapter (22) available at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/meningococcal-the-green-book-chapter-22 for further information on the use of all quadrivalent meningococcal vaccines.

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