

*directing council*



PAN AMERICAN  
SANITARY  
ORGANIZATION  
VII Meeting

*regional committee*

WORLD  
HEALTH  
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V Meeting



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Topic 30: CAMPAIGN AGAINST SMALLPOX

The Director-General of the World Health Organization has been instructed by the Executive Board (Resolution EB12/R13) to consult with Member States, WHO Regional Committees, and Members of relevant WHO Expert Advisory Panels to obtain suggestions and information on which to base a study on the means of implementing a campaign against smallpox and to report to the XIII Session of the Board on the results of these consultations. The Director-General is expecting the views of the Regional Committee, preferably in the form of a resolution, for transmission to the Executive Board as indicated.

The action of the Board was the result of a decision of the VI World Health Assembly, which passed a resolution (WHA6.18) requesting the Board "to proceed with a detailed study of the means of implementing such a campaign, this study to include, inter alia, consultation with Member States and with WHO Regional Committees."

The information contained in the attached annex is presented to the Directing Council of the Pan American Sanitary Organization, Regional Committee of the World Health Organization, in connection with this matter.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST SMALLPOX IN THE AMERICAS

1. BACKGROUND

For many years the problem of smallpox has received special attention by the Pan American Sanitary Organization. It will be remembered that the XIII Pan American Sanitary Conference (Ciudad Trujillo, 1950) recommended to the Members the development of a systematic program of smallpox vaccination and revaccination in the respective territories with a view to eradicating this disease, and that such programs be developed under the auspices of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau in agreement with the interested countries.

The Directing Council at its V Meeting (Havana, 1952) established a special fund of US\$75,000 to be utilized for the initiation of a Supplementary Program against Smallpox in 1953, and further authorized the Executive Committee to include such Program in the inter-country programs of the Proposed Program and Budget of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau for 1954.

2. THE PROBLEM

The available information about the incidence of smallpox, although incomplete, shows clearly that this disease is still a serious health problem for the Western Hemisphere.

During the five-year period 1948-1952, there were 85,900 cases and 14,200 deaths from smallpox reported to the Bureau by the health administrations of 17 countries. It should be added that, in a number of instances, the reports received were not complete.

3. THE PROGRAM

a) Reporting

Improvement in this aspect is necessary if a clearer understanding of the actual existence of the disease is to be obtained and a more rapid fulfillment of the objectives of the program of smallpox eradication thus achieved.

b) Production of Sufficient Amounts of Active and Stable Vaccine

Difficulties of transport, particularly in connection with use of glycerinated lymph, or the relative insufficiency of appropriate amounts of vaccine have been among the principal causes associated with the inadequate control of the disease.

In order to overcome these difficulties, local production of dry vaccine of high activity and great stability has been stimulated. This type of vaccine locally produced resolves the problems of transportation, climate and relative inability to acquire large quantities of the vaccine from producing countries.

c) Help and Advice to Laboratories

Equipment for production laboratories has been provided in 1952 and 1953 to some countries and will be provided in 1954 to others.

A vaccine production expert from the United States, specialized in the production of dry vaccine, has visited some countries and given advice and assistance to health authorities in establishing production laboratories for dry vaccine and will visit other countries in the near future.

In addition to the dry vaccine production expert, and in order to initiate adequate coordination of these programs and to assist the various countries in integrating their efforts toward the ultimate eradication of this disease, the Bureau provides one medical officer acting in the capacity of adviser and coordinator.

d) Advice on Administrative and Field Activities

The Bureau provides the necessary advice for planning and carrying out of field programs of vaccination and revaccination aimed at the eradication of the disease.

e) Training

Fellowships for training laboratory personnel in the technique of preparation of dry vaccine are to be provided.

Furthermore, the vaccine production expert is advising local personnel in the techniques of vaccine production.

#### 4. ACTIVITIES IN 1953

During this year laboratory equipment for production of dry vaccine was delivered to Ecuador.

The laboratory expert visited Lima early this year and assisted in the setting up of a laboratory for dry vaccine production which is now producing limited quantities of dry vaccine. In Ecuador, the expert assisted the local authorities in further preparing the laboratory for the receipt of the equipment being delivered during 1953.

The expert also went to Colombia, Bolivia and Chile at the request of the national health authorities to assist in the development of plans for instituting or improving dry vaccine production in these countries.

#### 5. PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

In 1954 the initiation of smallpox eradication program in Argentina, Brazil and Cuba, utilizing dry vaccine to be produced in each of these countries, is expected. Other countries, such as Paraguay and Uruguay, have also asked for assistance in developing or improving dry vaccine production. These countries will receive laboratory equipment to the extent requested and deemed necessary.

Through this program it is hoped that, by the end of 1954, the greatest step will have been taken toward the eradication of the disease.