

## Vaccination Coverage in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the 1992-1995 War

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**Aim.** Vaccination coverage in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH) decreased dramatically during the first two years of the war. The Ministry of Health of BH, with the support of UNICEF and the International Medical Corps, implemented an expanded program of immunization (EPI), and coverage studies as a constitutive part of the program. The aim of this study was to evaluate the vaccination coverage in the accessible areas of the country in the period from November 1994 to May 1995.

**Methods.** The pediatric coverage status for bacillus Calmette-Guérin vaccine (BCG), diphtheria toxoid, pertussis vaccine, tetanus toxoid (DPT), oral poliovirus vaccine (OPV) and measles were checked in 3,374 children aged 13-59 months, divided into two groups: 13 to 25 months of age, and 26 to 59 months of age. The first group had to obligatory receive BCG, OPV 1, OPV3, DTP 1, DTP 3 vaccination, whereas in the second group primary vaccination and the vaccination against morbilli had to be fully completed. The children were considered fully vaccinated if the application of at least one dose of BCG and measles and three doses of DPT and OPV were applied. Vaccination records were reviewed when available, but the information obtained from the parents was accepted in the absence of records.

**Results.** The average coverage in both groups was found to be 94.3% for BCG, 75.2% for DPT, 72.1% for OPV, and 63.8% for measles. The percentage of fully vaccinated children was 57.0%.

**Conclusion.** Although the coverage has significantly increased during the period of expanded program of immunization, it is still too low to guarantee a desirable immunity. The current policies and programs should be reviewed to improve the protection of the population at risk. Aggressive outreach campaigns combined with permanent vaccination points are necessary if the pre-war levels of protection (92-95%) is desired.

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