

## **Contents**

[Polio](#)

[NCIRS Fact Sheets](#)

[Operation Cumpston](#)

[Varicella Zoster Workshop](#)

[National Immunisation Kit](#)

[SBOIC Network Meeting](#)

[Australian General Practice Network Forum](#)

## **Polio**

Poliomyelitis (polio) is an infectious disease that is often associated with a previous era. It has been controlled for many years but not as yet eradicated globally. Australia has been basically clear of the disease with minimal number of cases over the past few years. However, in the past two years there has been a resurgence of the disease with 21 previously polio-free countries importing wild poliovirus type 1 and four countries experiencing outbreaks of more than 100 polio cases. One of these countries was Indonesia and as a close neighbour to Australia with a large number of people travelling to and from the area each year, we need to be particularly vigilant with our immunisation and surveillance programs.

The change in attitude by the Nigerian government during 2003 and 2004 meant the immunisation program was stopped and polio numbers increased. The virus has spread since then throughout the central and western regions of Africa. It also spread to Afghanistan, Pakistan and India and onto Indonesia. The movement of people across these regions presents a real risk for unimmunised people in our communities. It is an important warning to Australia that polio has not yet been eradicated and we need to stress this to people who believe the disease has gone and therefore there is no need to vaccinate.

This article provides interesting and useful information on polio and our need for vigilance and good surveillance. [Re-emerging poliomyelitis – is Australia's surveillance adequate?](#)  
<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/cda-cdi3003a.htm>

*Annual report of the Australian National Poliovirus Reference Laboratory 2005* can be found at  
<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/cda-cdi3003e.htm>

## **NCIRS Fact Sheets**

The National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance provides good relevant information concerning immunisation and vaccine preventable diseases. The centre produces Fact Sheets which are an excellent resource. The NCIRS website can be found at <http://www.ncirs.usyd.edu.au/> and the Fact Sheets directly at [http://www.ncirs.usyd.edu.au/facts/f-fact\\_sheets.html](http://www.ncirs.usyd.edu.au/facts/f-fact_sheets.html)

## **Exercise Cumpston**

The National Pandemic exercise was held in Queensland recently to test the preparedness of responses to a possible pandemic flu event. The information gained from the exercise will be used to upgrade the response

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*Australia's general practice immunisation newsletter*

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process and provide answers to questions on Australia's capability to deal with a possible pandemic. Keep up to date by checking the Department of Health Pan Flu site.

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/content/ohp-pandemic-clin-care-gl.htm>

## **Varicella Zoster Virus Workshop**

A 2-day workshop on the varicella zoster virus will be held in Sydney on the 16-17th November 2006. Prominent international guest speakers include Professor Myron Levin (US), Professor Anne Gershon (US) and Professor Judith Breuer (UK). A host of well-respected local speakers will join them including Professor Margaret Burgess and Associate Professor Alison Kesson. If you are interested in attending look at the NCIRS web site events for information <http://www.ncirs.usyd.edu.au/newsevents/index.html>

## **National Immunisation Kit**

The *ADGP Immunisation Kit: a practical guide to effective vaccine management* has been reprinted and copies are now available. Please contact me on the email address or number below if you would like a copy. The publication is designed to be a useable resource which can be added to when necessary and copied to provide information for others.

## **SBOIC Network Meeting**

The State Based Organisation Immunisation Coordinators met earlier in October to discuss the proposed Whole of Life Register. The coordinators met with the consultant engaged by the Department of Health and Ageing to carry out the first phase of the scoping study. They discussed many positive reasons to embrace a Whole of Life immunisation register and those issues which will adversely affect general practices and divisions.

## **A Final Reminder!! Australian General Practice Network Forum**

A reminder to register for this year's Australian General Practice Network Forum to be held in November on the Gold Coast in Queensland! The theme of the 2006 Forum – *building healthy communities through partnerships* – is reflected in the program through the plenary and concurrent sessions and we have a great line up of speakers.

Dr David Colin Thome, an expert from the UK in self management will open the plenary session Primary Care Now and Into the Future with a UK perspective. Dr Tony Hobbs, ADGP chair will outline the Australian perspective and the National Primary Care Partnership's vision.

The Forum provides an excellent opportunity for the divisions' network to maximise the impact of their contribution to community health and wellbeing through a program focusing on the future directions of primary health care in supporting general practice, building primary health care teams and strengthening partnerships between GPs, other health professionals, consumers and state health systems.

The concurrent streams will all look at partnerships:

1. The Maturing Network – Promoting our Brand
2. Partnerships through Divisions
3. Partnerships across the life span
4. Partnerships with general practice
5. Partnerships with government.

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