

African Region Monitoring Vaccine Effectiveness Network (AFRO-MoVE)

Scientific Steering Committee

Terms of Reference

Introduction

Post-introduction studies on the impact, effectiveness and safety of the vaccines are essential to inform public health policies and strategies. Monitoring and evaluating the real-world vaccine effectiveness (VE) is critical for understanding the risks and benefits of vaccination programmes. Real-world VE studies can also answer questions about vaccine effectiveness by age-group and risk factors, on duration of vaccine protection, protection against transmission and against new strains or serotypes, as well as the relative effectiveness of different vaccines, number of doses and their timings.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to the rapid development and introduction of new vaccines to reduce burden of disease and mitigate epidemic impacts. Vaccination is ongoing in the African region, with several products in use and new vaccines expected to be introduced.

The WHO Regional Office for Africa (WHO AFRO) has set-up a vaccine effectiveness network named AFRO-MoVE (African Region Monitoring Vaccine Effectiveness) to support member states to conduct VE studies. The network aims to provide key information to support COVID-19 pandemic response but also to establish a sustainable platform to monitor vaccine effectiveness for COVID-19, other known or emerging respiratory viruses including seasonal and pandemic influenza and RSV. The AFRO-MoVE network takes a multidisciplinary approach to include expertise in epidemiology, virology, biostatistics, immunology and vaccinology.

Network activities support WHO principles and actions: to enable the highest possible level of health for all people, and uphold principles of human rights, universality and equity as established in WHO's Constitution, applying the highest ethical standards.

The AFRO-MoVE Scientific Steering Committee (SSC) has been established to provide technical guidance, ongoing scientific advice on strategic priorities for the network. The AFRO-MoVE Scientific Steering Committee will be coordinated by the AFRO-MoVE Network Secretariat, which will ensure liaison with regional and global activities on vaccine post-introduction evaluation activities.

Objectives

- To provide scientific advice and direction to support AFRO-MoVE network activities
- To review and discuss ongoing study results and projects
- To promote harmonisation of study procedures, data analysis and pooling of data from different countries and/or sites
- To advocate for additional funding for VE in the African region and identify opportunities for funding
- Assist in the identification of partners that WHO or AFRO-MoVE may approach to join the network
- To advocate for support for vaccine effectiveness studies in the region

Regular meetings and working mode

Meetings

- The SSC will meet on a quarterly basis by video-teleconference
- In person meetings may be organised on an ad-hoc basis
- Scientific steering committee (SSC) members may also be invited to all AFRO-MoVE network meetings and to selected workshops as needed

Communications

- Member are expected to engage throughout the year, primarily via e-mail and videoconferencing / phone calls

Deliverables

- Draft recommendations for:
 - Key scientific questions to be answered by the network
 - Study designs for specific pathogens, or products, or for multi-pathogen or multi-product platforms
 - Structure and operation of AFRO MoVE network
- Annual report on application of principles or collaboration and ethical standards
- Contribute to and approve annual report on AFRO-MoVE activities and project timelines
- Support and approval of AFRO-MoVE network evaluations
- Contribute to study protocol development and adaptation

Membership

The scientific steering committee (SSC) will include a maximum of 12 voting members. The SSC may include:

- Subject-matter experts (SMEs),
- Representatives from key implementing institutions and stakeholders (PIs for studies funded by AFRO or the network)
- Funding agencies
- Representatives of regional regulatory authorities or NITAGs
- Representatives from other respiratory disease networks

Membership may be adjusted based on participation and to suit needs as projects and knowledge advance.

For the purpose of meetings, quorum will be represented when 60% presence is achieved.

Remuneration

Participation in the SSC is on a voluntary basis and is not remunerated by WHO.

Associated activities may be financially supported, only where clearly stated. This may include travel costs of members for in person meetings or other network related activities incurring significant time spent, use of resources, or travel. WHO expenses will be in line with WHO's policies and regulations.

Confidentiality

Confidential information may be shared in the context of the SSC or AFRO-MoVE activities. WHO AFRO and SSC member are expected to maintain non-public information confidential. Where data sharing may occur in a structured manner, this will be overseen by the AFRO-MoVE data sharing agreement. All members to complete and submit WHO declaration of conflict forms.