

Israel

15.4 Poliomyelitis

Dear Chair,

We would like to address item 15.4 Poliomyelitis, specifically the matter of Poliomyelitis eradication. As noted in the report on poliomyelitis eradication, in the past two years, a number of countries have reported vaccine-derived poliovirus cases, Israel among them.

In 2021 and early 2022, Israel isolated vaccine derived poliovirus type 3 (VDPV3) from routine sewage sampling. In February 2022 a single case of acute flaccid paralysis was detected based on routine AFP surveillance. This child tested positive for VDPV3.

In April 2022 vaccine derived poliovirus type 2 was detected in sewage, initially in the Jerusalem area and later spreading nationwide. One clinical case from this Polio type 2 variant was detected in February 2023 in northern Israel, again through routine AFP surveillance.

Both AFP cases were unvaccinated against polio. Since 2013, the polio vaccine schedule in Israel has included four doses of IPV and two doses of bivalent OPV. The Israel Ministry of Health responded to the VDPV3 event with an intensive IPV and bivalent OPV catchup campaign.

The last cVDPV3 isolation was detected on May 16 in environmental samples.

Israel's response to the VDPV2 event emphasized IPV catchup because the bOPV used in Israel does not include type 2 poliovirus.

The cVDPV2 virus continues to circulate in Israel. However, it is significantly reduced in geographic spread. It is identified currently only in the town of the index case. No additional clinical cases have been detected.

VDPV2 has been isolated in communities in New York and London.

Israel is in frequent consultation with WHO experts who have sent a delegation to Israel for further discussions. Vaccine coverage of three doses of IPV in the 2020 cohort is approximately 96%. Coverage of at least a single dose of bOPV in the same cohort is 91%.

That vaccine derived polioviruses can circulate widely in highly vaccinated countries highlights the challenges in achieving polio eradication. However, I am confident that with appropriate international collaboration and responsible governance, this can be achieved.