Through the sheer will of its political leadership, DPR Korea has maintained high immunization coverage, established an effective surveillance system and instituted collective responsibility of health workers and community. As a result, the country has surged forward to be at the forefront of the fight against measles.

Measles at a Glance

DPR Korea, 2018

- Strong leadership
- Careful planning and implementation
- Strong health system
- A passionate workforce that took ownership of the programme
- Community participation
- Quality assurance
- Careful monitoring

What made DPR Korea successful in combating measles?

- Provinces meeting discarded non-measles, non-rubella rate of 2 or more per 100,000 population
- Suspected cases with fever and rash
- Serum samples received in laboratory within 5 days of sample collection
- Serum sample with serology result within 4 days of sample receipt in the laboratory
- Suspected cases with serum samples collected
- Suspected cases with serological testing
- Discarded non-measles non-rubella rate per 100,000 population
- Measles surveillance

Measles at a Glance

- Reporting sites for measles and rubella
- 7954
- Sentinel sites for congenital rubella syndrome (CRS) surveillance
- 222
- Accredited measles and rubella laboratory
- 1

Active case search

- Household doctors located at the 7 medical clinics visit the community every day
- Acute respiratory doctors conduct detailed investigations of detected cases

Serum samples received in laboratory within 5 days of sample collection

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DPR Korea: An overview

12 Provinces
3 Directly governed cities
25 030 070 Total population
1 696 094 Under-five population
17.68/1 000 Under-five mortality

Significant events

1967
Introduction of MCV1 with domestic vaccine

1997
Switch to WHO prequalified MCV

2006
Introduction of disease surveillance for measles and rubella

2007
Nationwide MCV SIA for individuals aged 6 months–45 years subsequent to successfully managing a huge measles outbreak

2008
Introduction of MCV2; first accreditation of the National Laboratory for MR by WHO

2014
Country’s surveillance system ably detects three imported cases of measles from neighbouring countries

2015-2016
MR SIA for children aged 12 months–16 years in selected areas

2018
Verification that DPR Korea has eliminated measles

Findings of suspected measles cases in 2017

106 total suspected cases
0 cases classified as rubella
0 cases classified as measles
0 clinically measles or rubella compatible
106 discarded cases (non-measles, non-rubella)

DPR Korea took cognizance of the threat measles posed to its citizens, introducing the measles-containing vaccine (MCV) into its health system in 1968. With the launch of the EPI in the early 1980s and combined efforts of all leaders, health workers and community members to contain the virus, no sporadic incidents or outbreaks have been reported since 2014. Coordination with international establishments has also helped the country to strive towards achieving a high level of population immunity against the dreaded disease.

Coverage of 1st and 2nd doses of measles vaccine and no. of measles cases (2002–2016)
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