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Lianhe Wanbao
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24 October 2005
The world's first pneumococcal vaccine for children to be available in Singapore

Wyeth

全球第一种 婴儿防肺炎疫苗 狮城今面市

邓伟坚 报道

供初生要到2岁大幼儿预防脑膜炎、肺炎及中耳炎等疾病的疫苗，今天在新加坡面市。

疫苗叫做Prevenar，是全世界首次面市，用来预防由肺炎链球菌（*Streptococcus pneumoniae*）引起的肺炎球菌疾病的疫苗。

肺炎球菌疾病比骨痛热症更易传播，足以致命，也造成更大的损害，因此，疫苗的面市具有重要意义。

由肺炎球菌所引起的

疾病分两类：

·非侵害性疾病：鼻窦炎、中耳炎；

·具侵害性疾病：肺炎、脑膜炎及菌血症。

后者可对性命构成威胁，导致生还者残缺不全，有的失聪，有的脑血栓、大脑性瘫痪及脑损伤。

每一年，肺炎链球菌导致120万名小于5岁的儿童死亡。

儿童的免疫力较低，受这种细菌侵袭的危险性较高，而到目前为止，市面上还没有可以为婴儿及2岁大的幼童提供保护的疫苗，抗生素也显得力量

不足，预防由肺炎球菌引发的疾病，刻不容缓。

竹脚妇幼医院传染病科主任张家荣高级顾问医生今天在疫苗面市的记者会上说，竹脚医院的调查显示，在新加坡，从1998年到2004年的7年里，5岁以下儿童感染肺炎球菌疾病的儿童，每10万人中有18人。

她说，由肺炎球菌所引起的肺炎，发病率从1999年的12%，增至去年的25%，由这种病菌引起的脑膜炎，发病率高达80%。

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33 cases of meningitis in 7 years: KK Hospital records

从1998年到2004年的7年里，单是在竹脚妇幼医院，脑膜炎病例为33起。

在这33起病例中，必须被送到加护病房的达55%，60%生还者的并发症，包括耳聋、瘫痪、发育生长迟缓，死亡率为23%。

菌血症在7年内的病例为29起，7%必须被送到加护病房，死亡率为

竹脚妇幼医院记录： 7年33脑膜炎病例

4%，并发症包括感染性休克、病菌传播到多个器官，造成肾脏或肝脏衰竭。

竹脚妇幼医院传染病科主任张家荣高级顾问医生，在记者会上透

露上述数字。

她说，引发菌血症及脑膜炎的最大元凶，就是肺炎链球菌，这种病菌也是引发鼻窦炎、中耳炎及肺炎的首号凶手。

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New childhood vaccine

Authorities are studying if a new childhood vaccine for diseases like pneumonia and meningitis should be made compulsory.

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THE STRAITS TIMES WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 26, 2005



Govt to decide if all kids need vaccine against pneumonia

Current study also covers bacteremia, meningitis; new US vaccine found effective

By LEE HUI CHIEH

RESEARCHERS here are studying how common diseases like pneumonia and meningitis are among children here before the Health Ministry decides if a new childhood vaccine against them should be made compulsory.

They are reviewing data from

the past seven years on young patients below 20 who have been treated for moderate to severe pneumonia, bacteremia and meningitis.

These are caused by a bacterium called *streptococcus pneumoniae*, or *pneumococcus*, and can lead to learning disabilities and paralysis, and even death.

They proved fatal in 6 per cent of the cases in an earlier survey done by KK Women's and Children's Hospital (KKH).

It found 144 of its patients suffering from such diseases from January 1998 to December last year. Nine of them died, mostly from meningitis.

The current study involves researchers from the Health Ministry as well as the National University Hospital and KKH.

The study assumes significance because of a new vaccine called Prevenar.

It is the first vaccine to protect children as young as six weeks old.

Produced by the United States-based pharmaceutical company Wyeth, Prevenar was launched here on Monday.

It is meant for children up to nine years old.

Before this, there was a vaccine for those aged two and above for protection against meningitis and bacteremia, but not pneumonia,

and it was effective only about 60 per cent of the time, said the head of KKH's infectious diseases unit, Dr Chong Chia Yin.

A clinical study conducted in California of more than 37,000 infants found that the new vaccine was between 89.1 per cent and 97.4 per cent effective against diseases like pneumonia and meningitis.

Prevenar also protects against milder forms of the bacteria which can cause diseases like middle-ear infection.

But will the new vaccine be made compulsory?

That will depend on how cost-effective it is, said Dr Chong.

Prevenar costs about \$170 for each dose, and children may need up to four doses depending on their age. Younger children will need more doses.

Dr Chong said: "If it's within the parents' budget, they should get their children vaccinated, especially those aged below five. Prevention is always better than cure."

It is a lesson that Ms Jeannie Koh, 38, and her six-year-old daughter, Reina, learnt the hard way.

Two months ago, Reina suffered from a severe bout of pneumonia that almost cost her her life.

She was hospitalised for 18 days, 11 of which were spent in intensive care.

It took her another two weeks of rest at home to recover fully.

Ms Koh, a housewife, said: "I didn't know pneumonia could be that serious. If this vaccine can help her avoid what she went through, why not?"

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