



**World Health
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Technical briefing on children's and adolescents' health in the WHO European Region

**Thursday, 19 September 2019
13:00–14:30, Lounge area 9**

Background

1. Good progress has been made in the WHO European Region overall on improving child mortality, which might be the reason for the widespread notion that the health and well-being of children and adolescents in the Region need no longer be a priority. Indeed, the Region includes countries with the lowest infant and child mortality rates in the world. However, in some countries in the Region, mortality reduction is stagnating and rates are even increasing, and as indicated in the recent progress report (document EUR/RC68/8(E)) on Investing in Children: the European Child and Adolescent Health Strategy 2015–2020 (as contained in document EUR/RC64/12), major areas for concern in terms of morbidity, well-being and child development persist, with new problems also emerging.

2. Areas of concern for child and adolescent health and well-being are also being identified by the WHO Secretariat. Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) is an active WHO collaboration that collects data every four years on children aged 11, 13 and 15 years, and is currently doing so in 46 Member States. Topics of recent HBSC reports include inequities, mental well-being, alcohol use, and physical activity and obesity rates. Data from the most recent survey (from 2017–2018) are being analysed and will be made available in March 2020; however, some data on electronic media use among adolescents obtained in that survey will be previewed in this briefing.

3. The performance of health systems in meeting the primary health care needs of children, and the competencies of providers – particularly for promoting early childhood development and adolescent health care – as well as the over-prescription of antibiotics and decreasing vaccination rates, are additional issues that need addressing in many countries.

4. Schools are also important because they should help enable children to acquire the skills and competences they need for their future lives, in areas such as health literacy, physical activity and nutrition. Responsive school health services in many countries need to be strengthened.

5. This technical briefing will highlight several of these problematic areas, where action is required in the Region. It will inform Member States about ongoing initiatives as well as plans for moving to a subsequent child and adolescent strategy after the current one expires in 2020.

Objectives of the technical briefing

6. The objectives of the briefing are as follows:
- to raise awareness that action is required in several areas of child and adolescent health and well-being, and address the misconception that all problems are solved in Europe;
 - to launch the initiative for children and adolescents, and present the available WHO tools and materials for improving child and adolescent health, including information on the development of a child and adolescent strategy for Europe for 2020–2030;
 - to advocate for child and adolescent health and build partnerships with Member States and other stakeholders to implement the required actions.

Outline of the briefing

Setting the scene: child and adolescent health in Europe

- Country representative
- Youth representative

Topics to be covered

- Breastfeeding
- Adolescent mental health
- Noncommunicable diseases in children: asthma
- Adverse childhood experiences and road safety
- Quality of care for children
- Complementary feeding
- Early childhood development
- Providing services to adolescents
- Tuberculosis in children
- Out-of-pocket payments
- Fetal alcohol syndrome
- Vaccines
- Electronic media use in adolescents

7. The topics will be covered in two panels with an introductory question and voting, with three-minute summaries of each topic. Contributions will be made by representatives of all programmes in the WHO Regional Office for Europe that have a component on children and adolescents. There will be a moderated discussion after each panel presentation and representatives of two Member States will make brief interventions.

Discussion

- How to close the gaps in child survival and well-being? Challenges for implementation

Summary and presentation of the way forward and launch of the initiative for children and adolescents

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