

ORGANIZATION, COVERAGE STRATEGIES AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF EXPANDED PROGRAMME ON IMMUNIZATION (EPI) IN PARAGUAY

Daniel Maceira and Sonia Bumbak

Abstract

The appearance in these last years of new vaccines with significantly higher prices than the ones already marketed requires that the Paraguayan authorities and donor agencies analyze the financial sustainability of the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI). The research objectives of this paper are twofold: identify the main factors that affect the financial sustainability at national level, and evaluate the programme performance by region and vaccine. For this purpose the document carries out a qualitative analysis of the relationship between the programme financing and immunization coverage levels, taking into account non financial factors that may contribute to explain coverage variability. The study uses data from official sources and telephone interviews with key personnel of each region. A series of immunization effectiveness indexes were constructed based on management, financing and vaccine provision criterions, at the same time distinguishing among financial sustainability, management and antigen supply volatility.

The analysis of EPI financing sources shows that the participation of external funds in the global financing is not very significant although its permanence guarantees a lower imbalance. On the other hand, non financial factors present limitations related to immunization management mechanisms. This result suggests the need of strengthening its accountancy. These findings were complemented with the analysis of the Integrated National Household Survey (2001), ratifying the importance of geographical, educational and ethnical barriers on the likelihood of being vaccinated. The sanitary policy variables that were statistically significant are associated with the relevance of community communication, measured in terms of physical, monetary and human resources involved. Also cultural factors, communitarian participation and sanitary behavior clearly affect coverage levels, implying additional campaigning efforts.

Correspondence to:
Daniel Maceira, Ph.D.
Senior Researcher
Center for the Study of State and Society
Buenos Aires, Argentina
Phone: (5411) 4861-2126
Fax: (5411) 4862-0805
Email: danielmaceira@cedes.org