

29th International Conference on

Vaccines and Immunization

March 19-20, 2018 | London, UK

Barriers to universal immunization coverage in Sub Saharan Africa (SSA)

Edison Arwanire Mworoz^{1,2} and Joseph Rujumba²¹Mulago National Referral Hospital, Uganda²College of Health Sciences Makerere University, Uganda

Vaccination is a cornerstone of any program that aims at reducing morbidity and mortality due to preventable diseases and is a cost-effective intervention. Despite efforts to reduce child mortality about 10 million children under five years of age die annually the majority from developing countries, SSA inclusive. Thus, vaccine preventable diseases continue to be an important public health problem in SSA. It is estimated that vaccines prevent more than 2.5 million child deaths annually and that fully vaccinated children by nine months of age suffer lesser related morbidity and mortality. Immunization is key to attaining Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 3) aiming at reducing under-five mortality to less than 25/1000 live birth by 2030. Globally attaining universal childhood vaccination remains a major challenge particularly in reaching the most vulnerable in SSA. Despite availability of effective vaccines, immunization coverage remains low in SSA due to various factors including: inadequate & poorly motivated health workers (HWs), inadequate immunization knowledge and skills by HWS, multiple languages, low education levels of caretakers, cultural and religious beliefs, poor access to health facilities, poor social economic status, political instability and displacement, mobile populations, negative messaging and anti-vaccine lobby, inadequate funding, inadequate social mobilization and concerns about vaccine safety. Achieving universal immunization coverage and SDG 3, in SSA calls for multiple strategies including multi-sectoral collaboration and partnerships, training of HWs, universal education, improved infrastructure, addressing cultural and religious beliefs, ensuring political stability, improved social mobilization and vaccine safety communication and adequate health financing in general and immunization in particular.

emworoz@gmail.com