

Situation Report 12 Polio Outbreak

20 December 2019

Highlights

- Two healthy contacts were confirmed with cVDPV2 in the past week
- Currently 9 human cases confirmed with cVDPV2; one case with cVDPV1; one case with VDPV1; and one case with immunodeficiency-related VDPV type 2 (iVDPV2).
- One case of cVDPV1 from Malaysia was confirmed as genetically linked to the Basilan case.
- Synchronized polio vaccination campaign conducted on 25 November-13 December (including 7 days of extension) vaccinated 1,404,517 (110%) children under 5 with bivalent Oral Polio Vaccine (bOPV) against poliovirus type 1 in National Capital Region (NCR), and 2,937,327 (95%) with monovalent OPV against poliovirus type 2 (mOPV2) in Mindanao.
- Department of Health (DOH) planning to conduct outbreak immunization with bOPV targeting 710,296 children under 10 in the Sulu Archipelago, Zamboanga City and Lambayong, Sultan Kudarat on 6-12 January 2020.
- Additional 4 rounds of vaccination planned for February-March 2020 in NCR with mOPV2 and in Mindanao with bOPV.
- Current polio outbreak resulting from persistently low routine immunization coverage, and poor sanitation and hygiene.
- **Philippines is affected by both cVDPV1 and cVDPV2. cVDPV is considered a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC).**

# of samples confirmed	VDPV1	cVDPV1	iVDPV2	cVDPV2
Environmental		13		17
Human	1	1	1	9
Healthy children				5
Contacts				2



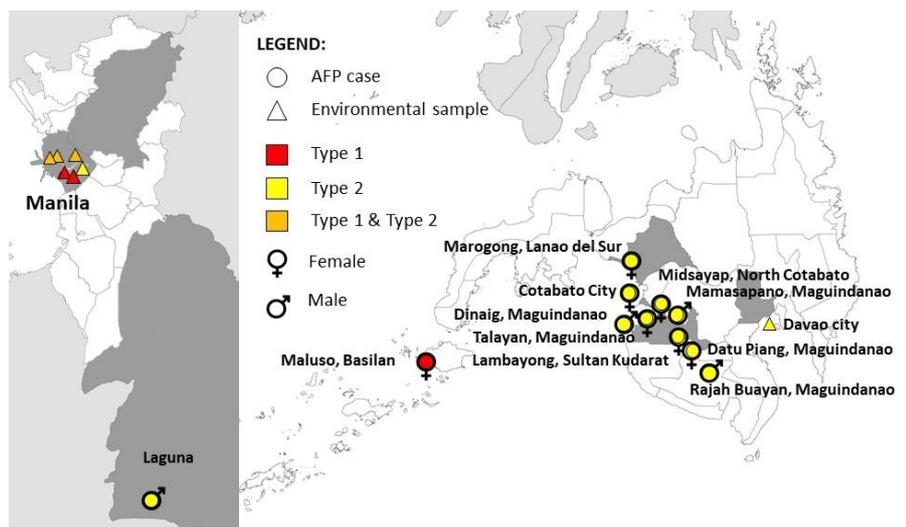
Bayang Rural Health Unit in Lanao del Sur in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM)

Current Situation

Table 1: Age and Gender per Type and Location of Polio Cases

Type	Age	Gender	Region
cVDPV2	3	F	BARMM
iVDPV2	5	M	IV-A
cVDPV2	4	F	BARMM
cVDPV2	3	F	XII
cVDPV2	2	F	BARMM
cVDPV2	2	M	XII
cVDPV2	4	F	XII
cVDPV2	2	M	BARMM
cVDPV1	9	F	BARMM
cVDPV2	<1	M	BARMM
cVDPV2	<½	M	BARMM
VDPV1	4	F	XII

Figure 1: VDPV Locations in the Philippines as of 19 December 2019



Circulating Vaccine Derived Polio Virus type 1 (cVDPV1)

A cVDPV1 case in Sabah State, Malaysia was confirmed to be genetically linked to the Basilan case by the Victorian Infectious Diseases Reference Laboratory (VIDRL) in Australia. Since the two viruses are genetically linked they are both classified as circulating.

All 13 cVDPV1 environmental samples found in Manila are all genetically linked.

DOH agreed to conduct 2 additional rounds of immunization against poliovirus type 1 in Mindanao in February-March 2020, using bOPV.

Circulating Vaccine Derived Polio Virus type 2 (cVDPV2)

All 9 human cases and 17 environmental samples confirmed with cVDPV2 are genetically linked. All human cases were reported from Mindanao (BARMM and Region XII), whereas environmental samples were found in NCR and Davao.

DOH agreed to conduct 2 additional rounds of immunization against poliovirus type 2 in NCR in February-March 2020, using mOPV2.

All samples were tested by the National Polio Laboratory at the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM), whereas sequencing and genetic analysis is done at the NIID in Japan and additional genetic characterization provided by the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Response

Risk assessment

The risk for further polio transmission continues to be assessed as high at the national level with an increasing number of human cases and environmental samples testing positive for poliovirus type 1 and 2, because of chronically suboptimal immunisation coverage, sub-optimal performance of AFP surveillance, and poor sanitation and hygiene conditions.

With the first confirmed VDPV1 case exported from the Philippines to Malaysia, the regional risk of potential spread across international borders remains moderate, especially considering the large number of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) and the ease of travel between islands without any form of control (Figure 2), especially by traders from Mindanao.

A teleconference was held between DOH and the Malaysian Ministry of Health on 6 December 2019 to discuss additional measures to be taken by the 2 countries to minimise the spread of polio across borders.

Coordination

DOH is coordinating the polio response through its Incident Command Structures (ICS) and Emergency Operation Centers (EOC) set up in each region, as well as the Mindanao and national levels. DOH issues daily bulletins with coverage data, Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI), AFP and environmental surveillance updates from the 7 regions.

WHO and UNICEF are closely coordinating the response with DOH at all levels:

- UNICEF mobilized 5 consultants on supply chain and vaccine management, 3 local immunization technical consultants, 2 communication for development (C4D) consultants and information management.
- WHO mobilised 20 international consultants who are supporting DOH with the implementation of the campaign: 14 in Mindanao and 6 in NCR. These include the Stop Transmission of Polio (STOP) consultants. WHO is also supporting DOH with strengthening its ICS and EOCs at all levels.

Overall risk		
National	Regional	Global
High	Moderate	Low

Figure 2: Proximity VDPV1 cases in Basilan (Philippine) and Sabah (Malaysia)



Surveillance

The annualized Non-Polio AFP (NPAFP) rate from 1 January to 30 November 2019 is 1.11, with no region meeting the standard. Adequacy of stool collection from 1 July to 30 November 2019 is 41%, with no region meeting the recommended 80%. Of all AFP cases, 45% is female, and 55% is male.

Figure 3: Number of reported AFP cases
21 July-30 November 2019

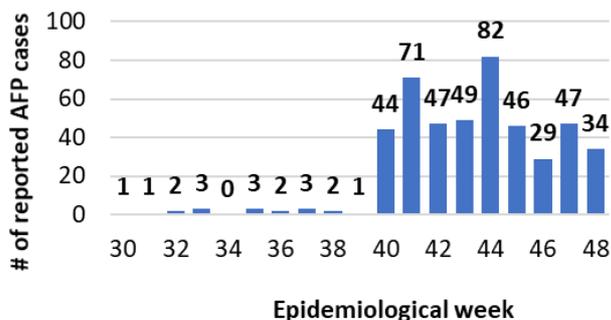
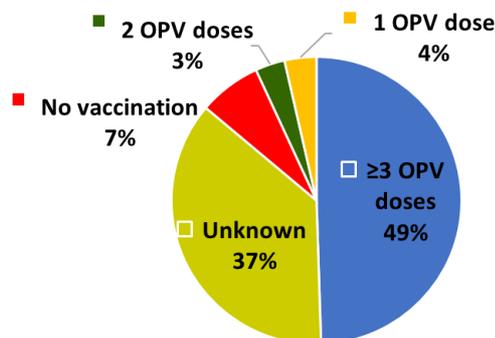


Figure 4: OPV status of reported AFP cases
(N=788) 1 January-30 November 2019



Immunization response

The latest round of the synchronized polio vaccination campaign conducted on 25 November-13 December vaccinated 4,341,844 children under 5, which is 99% of the target 4.4 million children under 5. The campaign was extended with 7 days.

In NCR 1,404,517 children were vaccinated (110%) using bOPV, whereas in Mindanao 2,937,327 were vaccinated using mOPV2 (95%) (Figure 5 and 6).

In spite of high coverage, there are almost 180,000 children that remain unvaccinated in all target regions except for NCR. The majority of unvaccinated children are from North Cotabato.

Figure 5: Coverage of polio vaccination campaign
25 November-13 December 2019

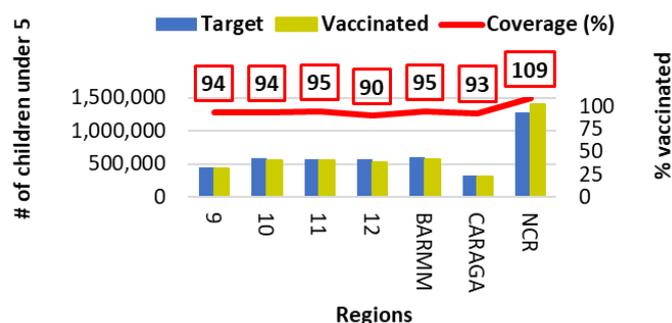
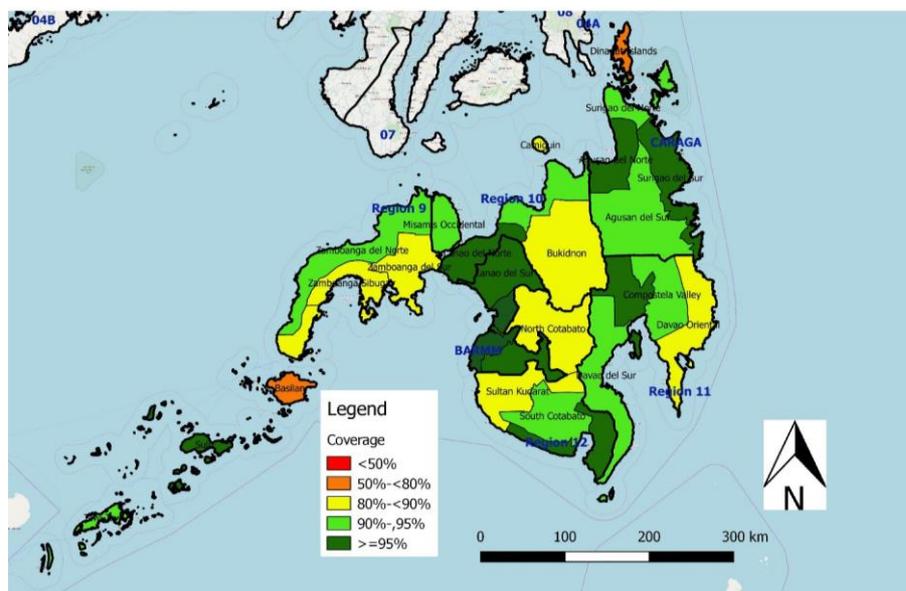


Figure 6: Mindanao coverage* 25 November-13 December 2019



* As recorded through mobile application ODK

Staff from UNICEF, WHO and DOH not directly involved in vaccination activities conducted a total of 8,201 Rapid Convenience Assessments (RCA) at household level, as well as 370 market surveys.

Monitors checked 160,000 children, out of which 1.7% were found to be unvaccinated. Monitors also asked caregivers for reasons for missing vaccination and how they knew about the campaign (Figure 7 and 8).

Figure 7: Reason for missing vaccination by Region in %

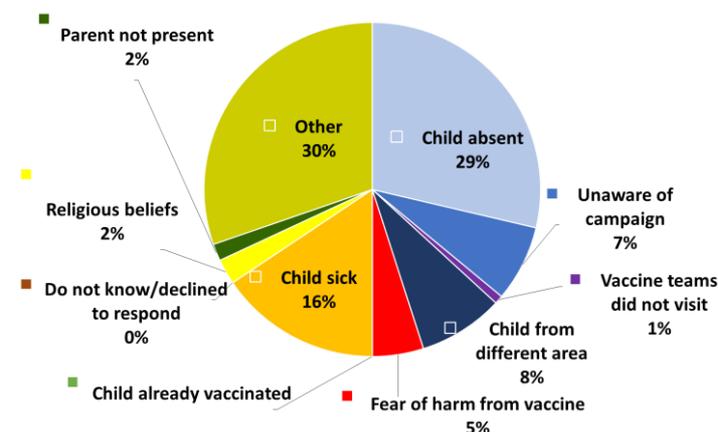
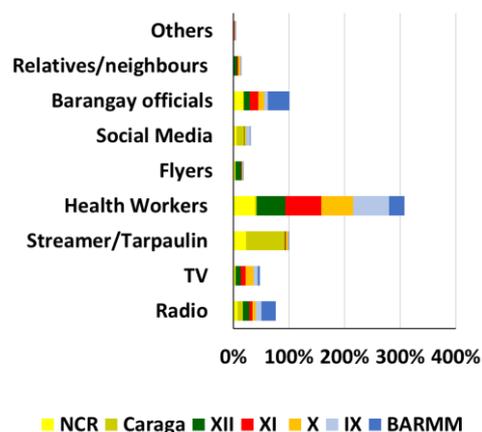


Figure 8: Source of information about campaign by Region in % (N=119,756)



Overall RCA data support the administrative coverage reported and suggest good quality of the campaign in most regions. Monitors shared with local health centers those areas where they identified unvaccinated children, so that local staff could revisit the area for mop-up vaccination. This information has also been shared with DOH counterparts to plan vaccination strategies to reach missed children in the next campaigns and successfully interrupt poliovirus transmission.

There is a need to review target populations in areas with extreme coverage with support of RCA findings.

Other reasons for unvaccinated children are related to remote location of island barangays with islet sitios or villages, mobile populations, presence of lawless elements and insurgent groups, lack of internet access and intermittent telephone signal, and weather conditions (recent typhoon Tisoy) which negatively affected the campaign in coastal and island barangays. In large cities, pockets of children may have been missed in crowded areas with depressed and mobile populations.

In response to first human VDPV1 case from the island province of Basilan, outbreak immunization was conducted in Maluso, Basilan with bOPV, vaccinating 13,547 children under 10 years old (102% of the target). An additional campaign is planned in Basilan, Sulu, Tawi Tawi, Zamboanga City and Lambayong on 6-12 January 2020 targeting 710,296 children 0 to 10 years old. Further bOPV campaigns are proposed for February-March 2020 targeting 3,461,134 children under 5 in Mindanao.

In response to the increasing number of environmental samples testing positive for cVDPV2 in Manila, two rounds of vaccination campaigns using mOPV against poliovirus type 2 are planned in NCR for January and February 2020 targeting 1,276,993 children under 5.

Vaccine Logistics

UNICEF conducted cold chain inventory in Mindanao to address critical gaps. DOH provided refrigerators and vaccine carriers which were transported by UNICEF to the regions. UNICEF procured freezers, ice-packs, Ziploc bags, plastic bags, generators, solar refrigerates, automatic voltage regulator (1000 watts) and small size vaccine carriers. In general, health facilities are equipped with vaccine refrigerators and often with more than two: a sign of adequate storage capacity. It is recommended to redistribute the second fridges to more needy health facilities which currently use commercial refrigerators.

Vaccines are properly stored in freezers but often not properly labelled. Vaccinators are advised to ensure proper storage and management of vaccines and to return the opened vials for use in next vaccination sessions.

Distribution of mOPV2 for the next round will start on 22 December 2019.

DOH borrowed bOPV from the routine immunization stocks for the NCR October and November rounds as well as for the upcoming round in Mindanao in January. There will be no new government stock available until March 2020. Therefore, there is a serious risk these rounds will have to be postponed.

Social Mobilization and Partners' engagement

UNICEF initiated partnership with Relief International and Human Development and Empowerment Services Inc (HDES) to intensify social mobilization efforts in high risk areas in Mindanao. HDES conducted review and planning meeting in Zamboanga City on 19 December 2019, with 20 social mobilisers to support the upcoming round from 6-12 January 2020, in selected areas.

In preparation for the next round in January 2020, UNICEF supported DOH in refining key messages, frequently asked questions, and the updating of communication materials such as health worker and social mobilizer guides, posters emphasizing the need for multiple doses, audio and video materials. Print materials are now being re-produced and will be delivered to all regions early January.

For updated communication and social mobilization resources, visit: <https://poliofreeph.wixsite.com/poliofreeph>

UNICEF also facilitated the engagement of a research team to conduct a qualitative research in selected areas in Mindanao and NCR to understand knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions regarding the campaign, the vaccine, and the vaccinators. The research aims to determine 1) reasons for refusals and polio risk perception among parents and caregivers of children under 5; 2) health workers' capacity to communicate and engage with parents and caregivers; and 3) how refusals were handled.

On 12-13 December, DOH with support from WHO and UNICEF held a *Communication Review Workshop for the Polio Outbreak Response* for regional and provincial health promotion focal points from Mindanao to review regional and provincial immunization coverage in the previous round, issues and challenges particularly on social mobilization, and lessons learned. Participants also developed their social mobilization workplans for the next round in January 2020.

The Philippine Red Cross (PRC) mobilised over 1,000 volunteers who helped vaccinate more than 155,000 children. PRC organised a post-round lessons learned workshop on 18 December with 9 NCR Chapters. PRC with support from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) purchased light vaccine carriers, produced its own door stickers to show the number of vaccinated children in each household, among other.

In response to a request from DOH central office, UNICEF also supported the engagement and training of 30 PRC volunteers to conduct active surveillance in the City of Manila. They will be deployed for 30 days starting 19 December.

UNICEF also mobilized youth volunteers to conduct RCAs in 515 out of 896 barangays (59%) on 14-16 December in the City of Manila. Results are now being consolidated.

All partners supporting the polio response are requested to:

- ➔ Update <https://tinyurl.com/phpolio3W> with information on Who is doing What Where to better measure the impact of activities
- ➔ Report through UNICEF's Social Mobilization Indicators tool at <https://enketo.ona.io/x/#MNquhgob>
username: spvrca
password: spvrca123



Risk communication

- Global Polio Eradication Initiative: <http://polioeradication.org/where-we-work/philippines/>
- DOH Advisory: Polio Vaccination for Travelers Coming to the Philippines 10 October 2019 <https://www.doh.gov.ph/advisories/Polio-Vaccination-for-Travelers-coming-to-the-Philippines>
- DOH approved risk communication messages for different audiences available at <https://poliofreeph.wixsite.com/poliofreeph> with password: AdiosPolio.

All relevant information including previous situation reports, can be found here:

- <https://www.who.int/westernpacific/emergencies/polio-outbreak-in-the-philippines>

Funding allocation and budget

(US\$)	Budget	Allocation
Government*	6,772,249	6,772,249
WHO	3,176,858	574,320
UNICEF	3,245,205	380,362
Other partners (IFRC, Red Cross)		522,807**
Total	13,194,312	8,249,738

*Government has pledged US\$ 9 million

** Equivalent to CHF 517,719