

Launch of free online database of international TB vaccination policies: the BCG World Atlas

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A team of researchers from McGill University and the Research Institute of the McGill University Health Centre in Canada created an interactive website that provides free detailed information on current and past tuberculosis (TB) vaccination policies and practices for more than 180 countries: the BCG World Atlas [1].

The Atlas is intended to be a useful resource for clinicians, policymakers, and researchers and provides information that may be helpful for better interpretation of TB diagnostics as well as design of new TB vaccines [2]. The Bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine was introduced in 1921 and continues to be the only vaccine used to prevent TB. Clinicians need to be aware of the various BCG policies in different parts of the world, as well as of the changes made to those policies over time.

This project began in 2007 with the compilation of detailed information on past and present BCG vaccination policies on as many countries as possible. Data were assembled through questionnaires, published papers, reports, government policy documents and information available from the World Health Organization Vaccine Preventable Diseases Monitoring System [3]. Based on the data generated by all methods, countries were grouped into three main categories: (i) the country currently recommends universal BCG vaccination at a certain age; (ii) the country used to recommend universal BCG vaccination but currently does not; (iii) BCG vaccination is recommended only for selected high-risk groups or was never recommended.

References

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