

Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) 66th meeting 14 and 15 June 2018

ATAGI BULLETIN

The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) 66th face-to-face meeting was held on 14 and 15 June 2018 in Canberra.

Influenza

- ATAGI noted the unprecedented demand for seasonal influenza vaccine in 2018. ATAGI discussed influenza vaccine supply arrangements and provided clinical advice regarding supply constraints.
- ATAGI discussed the importance of influenza vaccination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 5–14 years. This cohort experiences a high burden of disease but is not eligible for vaccines through the National Immunisation Program.
- ATAGI encourages immunisation providers to report all influenza vaccinations, including those provided by state-funded programs, to the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR). This will ensure accurate capture of all doses administered.
- ATAGI encourages all providers to confirm the age of the person before administering a seasonal influenza vaccine. Age indications are printed on the barrels of all seasonal influenza vaccines in Australia to make it easier to administer the correct vaccine.

Meningococcal disease

- ATAGI reviewed the recent epidemiology for meningococcal disease.
- Updated recommendations for meningococcal vaccination are being prepared for publication in the Australian Immunisation Handbook.

Pneumococcal disease

- ATAGI noted the upcoming changes to the infant schedule for pneumococcal vaccination in Australia to provide a booster dose in the second year of life. The aim of this change is to mitigate breakthrough disease in young children.

Hepatitis A

- ATAGI discussed the recent increase in cases of hepatitis A in men who have sex with men. It was noted that some states and territories have routine or targeted vaccination strategies in place.

Australian Immunisation Handbook

- ATAGI reviewed the digital transformation of the Handbook and thanked the production team and the stakeholders who were consulted for their contributions.

- The format and presentation of the digital Handbook will be significantly different to the previous edition. However, no recommendations have been changed other than those that have been through a process of public consultation.
- The digital transformation raised several issues for review that will be subject to public consultation in the future. ATAGI agreed on a priority list for chapter updates.
- ATAGI endorsed the new digital Handbook and eagerly anticipates the launch of the new website in August 2018. ATAGI also provided advice to inform the communications strategy for immunisation providers.

Industry Day 2018

- The ATAGI Industry Day 2018 was held on Wednesday 13 June 2018 in Canberra. Industry representatives were invited to present to ATAGI on new and emerging vaccines, new technologies for assessing immunity, research updates on registered vaccines, improvements in delivery technologies, and timelines for vaccine submissions to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee. ATAGI thanked the participating companies for their contributions.

Other ATAGI business

- ATAGI was advised that Professor Ross Andrews has stepped down as the ATAGI Chair. ATAGI thanked Professor Andrews for his many years of service to ATAGI as member and Chair, and his significant contributions to immunisation policy in Australia.
- Associate Professor Chris Blyth and Professor Allen Cheng will act as co-chairs of ATAGI in the short term.
- The Department and ATAGI continued to review and refine ATAGI's conflict of interest policies and determinations.

Other issues in immunisation

- ATAGI endorsed clinical advice on immunisation during pregnancy and upcoming changes to the infant vaccination schedule. [These statements are available](#) on the Department of Health website.
- ATAGI received an update on epidemiology of vaccine-preventable diseases from the Communicable Diseases Network Australia.
- ATAGI received an update on the [AusVaxSafety program](#). Both participation in the program and response rates had increased substantially.

Summary of decisions of key immunisation technical advisory groups of interest

- Members noted the report from the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance summarising recent deliberations and recommendations from the Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization of the World Health Organization, and national immunisation technical advisory groups of the USA, UK, Canada and New Zealand.

Notes and resources

- [ATAGI's membership](#), terms of reference and conflict of interest information are available on the Department of Health website.
- The [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#) is available on the Department's website.
- The [summary of decisions](#) of key immunisation technical advisory groups of interest report will be available on the NCIRS website.
- [Information on NITAGs](#) worldwide is available on the NITAG Resource Centre website.
- Next ATAGI meeting: Thursday 11 October to Friday 12 October 2018. The [meeting agenda](#) will be published on the Department of Health website shortly before the meeting.