

Circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus confirmed in Israel



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On Monday, 7 March 2022, a case of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 3 (cVDPV3) was confirmed in an unvaccinated girl aged 3 years and 9 months in Israel. The girl had developed acute flaccid paralysis and, upon testing of her stool, poliovirus was confirmed.

Further testing of the poliovirus isolated from the girl revealed genetic links to VDPV3 strains detected in environmental samples collected from sites in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory between September 2021 and January 2022. These isolates, previously classified as ambiguous VDPV3, have now been reclassified as circulating VDPV3 (cVDPV3).

While at this time there is no evidence of circulation of this cVDPV3 in occupied Palestinian territory, the interconnectedness of communities on both sides of the border and the volume and frequency of cross-border population movement underscores the risk to unvaccinated children in both places.*

Local health authorities are conducting field, epidemiological and virological investigations to determine more clearly the source and origin of the isolated virus, and the potential risk of further spread associated with it.

Experts from the headquarters and regional and country offices of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) partnership, which includes the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance), Rotary International, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and WHO, are working together to help ensure an appropriate response and cessation of this outbreak.

Detection of this cVDPV3 underscores the importance of strong disease surveillance and high population immunity levels, in order to

minimize the risk and consequences of any poliovirus introduction or emergence.

The GPEI partnership urges all health authorities to enhance surveillance of poliovirus and implement enhanced vaccination response to prevent further transmission so that no child is at risk of lifelong paralysis from a disease that can so easily be prevented.

* A previous version of this news story published on 10 March 2022 had indicated circulation of this VDPV3 also in occupied Palestinian territory; further field investigations concluded that at this time, although circulation in occupied Palestinian territory cannot be ruled out, circulation can only be confirmed in Israel. This classification does not however change the risk classification this cVDPV3 presents to occupied Palestinian territory, nor for planned response activities.

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