

Global Issues in Vaccine Hesitancy

Impacts of vaccine refusal on the global efforts to eradicate polio: The case of Nigeria

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Polio Vaccine Refusal in Nigeria

I. Polio eradication

II. Nigeria polio vaccine controversy (2003)

III. Polio vaccine refusal in Nigeria

IV. Lessons learned for polio eradication

V. Challenges for polio eradication



I. Polio Eradication

Global Polio Eradication Initiative was launched in 1988 and is led by the WHO, CDC and Rotary International.

Goals 2010 - 2012:

- interrupt wild poliovirus transmission in Asia and outbreak response
- interrupt wild poliovirus transmission in Africa
- enhancing poliovirus surveillance and response
- strengthening immunization systems

Enabling Factors:

- political engagement and oversight
- community mobilization
- vaccine supply financing
- prioritization of activities.

Polio Target for Nigeria:

- Eliminate polio from Nigeria by end of 2012



I. Polio Eradication

Progress to date

Challenges

- Failed to meet two previous deadlines to eradicate polio (2000, 2005)

Successes

- Eliminated polio in the Americas
- Eradicated wildpolio type 2 virus
- Reduced number of polio cases by 99% since 1988 (350,000 in 1988 / 627 in 2011)
- Since 2003 number of cases fluctuate between 1000 and 2000
- Number of countries reporting wild poliovirus cases between 12 and 23 since 2003
- Only 3 countries left with circulating wildpolio virus

Global Commitment

- Polio eradication declared a public health emergency
- 1 Billion dollars per year commitment for polio eradication until end of 2013





II. Nigeria Polio Vaccine Controversy

The Controversy

- 2003 community leaders (predominantly muslim clerics) in Northern Nigeria reject the polio vaccine
- 5 northern states in Nigeria ban polio vaccine and force WHO to cancel National Immunization polio campaign
- Sharia Council of Nigeria led by Dr. Datti Ahmed support the polio vaccine ban

The allegations

- Oral polio vaccine alleged to be a western plot to sterilize girls and women in Nigeria
- Oral polio vaccine contains the HIV virus
- Polio vaccine is contaminated with sterilization chemicals



II. Nigeria Polio Vaccine Controversy:

The Causes

- A 1996 Pfizer-meningitis study in Nigeria resulted in a class action suit from 20 participants
- Distrust of “Western Interventions” post 9/11
- Fewer polio cases and numerous polio campaign leading to public fatigue



II. Nigeria Polio Vaccine Controversy:

The Aftermath

- After 16 months the crisis was abated through concerted dialogue with Nigerian muslim leaders
- Continued public confusion and distrust of oral polio vaccine persists in Northern Nigeria
- In 2000 there were <50 cases of polio in Nigeria, in 2003 there were over 250



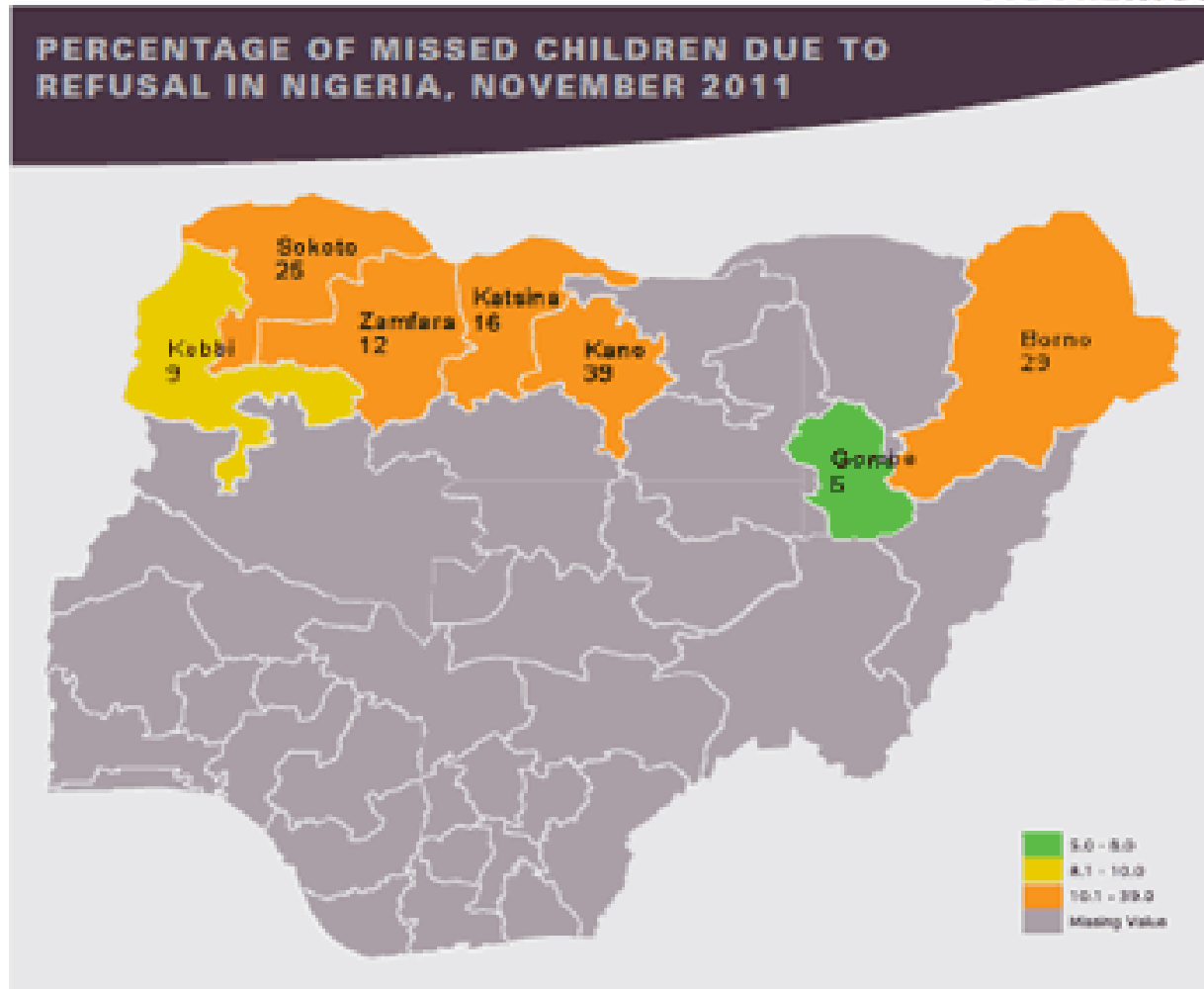
II. Nigeria Polio Vaccine Controversy: The Consequences

- Nigeria has the highest number of vaccine refusals in the world
- Nigeria only country left with circulating wildpolio type 1 and 3 virus
- Nigeria was identified as the #1 reservoir of polio in the world
- Wild poliovirus outbreaks (2004, 2009)
- Importation of wild poliovirus to neighbouring countries (Chad, Cameroon, Niger)



III. Polio Vaccine Refusal in Nigeria

FIGURE NIG 3

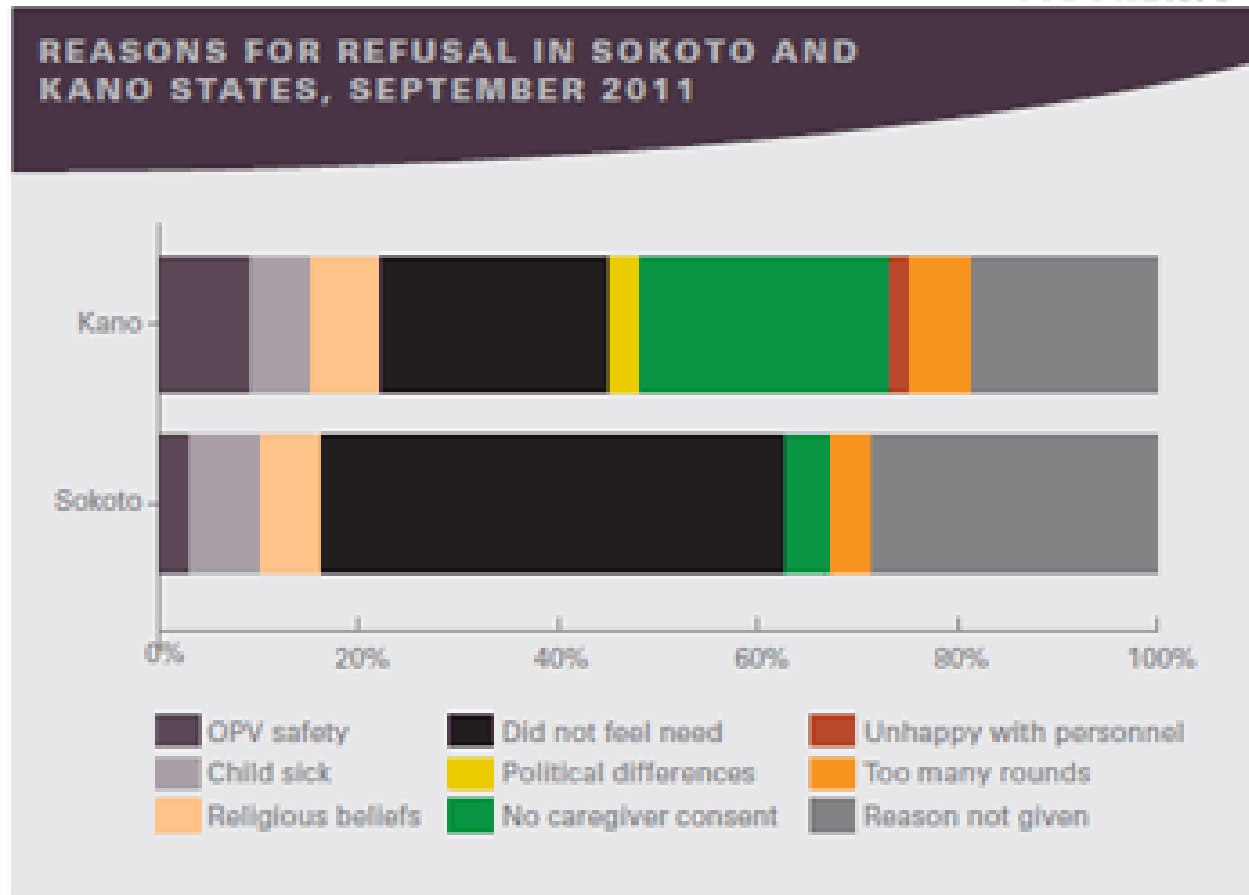


Source: Independent Monitoring data

polioinfo.org

III. Polio Vaccine Refusal in Nigeria

FIGURE NIG 4



Source: Independent Monitoring data

III. Polio vaccine refusal in Nigeria

Reasons given for vaccine hesitancy:

- The vaccine is not safe
- There are too many polio campaigns
- My child has already been vaccinated
- Why is the government spending money on polio vaccines instead of wells, roads, health clinics etc...



IV. Lessons Learned for Polio Eradication

- Gains in polio eradication are precarious and can easily be derailed by vaccine refusal
- Polio eradication initiatives need to consider the broader socio-political contexts particularly at the local level
- There is a need for community/district level targeted messaging around polio vaccine
- In Nigeria the traditional leaders have been a catalyst for change



V. Challenges for Polio Eradication

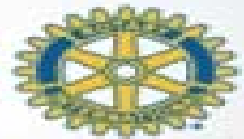
- Lack of involvement of community/traditional leaders in polio eradication efforts at the local level (routine immunization and SIAs)
- Insufficient integration of social mobilization activities in SIAs
- Lack of public awareness about polio of vaccine and the global effort to eradicate polio

“Social mobilization is the most important part of the polio eradication effort” STOP 40 Participant, Atlanta, 2012



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this disease off the face of the earth forever.
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Archbishop Desmond Tutu

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THANK YOU



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