

# Hit the Iron When it is Red Hot

Arnab Bhattacharyya<sup>1</sup>, Nilanjan De<sup>2</sup>, Safikul Sarkar<sup>3</sup>, Sital Chandra De<sup>4</sup>

Received on: 27 February 2023; Accepted on: 31 March 2023; Published on: 12 May 2023

**Keywords:** Acceptability, Adult, Immunization.

*Bengal Physician Journal* (2023); 10.5005/jp-journals-10070-8004

## To

The Editor

Bengal Physician Journal

## Respected Sir,

Since the days of the recent pandemic, the world population has been divided into two groups: men and women with and without masks. Whatever might be the habit, masks do prevent diseases and everybody is convinced about this fact (whether he or she uses it or not).

The sufferings of the last pandemic echo the age-old proverb “prevention is better than cure,” and people are also convinced that vaccination of individuals is a must along with wearing masks, hand washing, and other preventive measures. So, this has increased the acceptability of vaccination worldwide.

In India, till now we are more concerned about vaccination in childhood, and in this process, the program, i.e., Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) (1978), later converted to Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) (1985), launched by the Government of India to provide several vaccines to infants, children, and pregnant mothers in all districts of India, is a major success. But there is no such universal standardized adult vaccination guideline for more than 90 crores of adult people in India.<sup>1</sup> The only vaccine that is very popular among the adult population in India is Tetanus Toxoid and perhaps the second vaccine that has gained popularity during the last pandemic is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). But with the introduction of the mass vaccination program for COVID-19, people of the adult age group are now more inclined toward being vaccinated. Now there is widespread awareness among the beneficiaries as well as the medical fraternity regarding the vaccines, which can be administered in the adult age group. This concept is very important because till now the exact burden of vaccine-preventable diseases (VPDs) of the adult population is unknown in India.<sup>2</sup>

Adult persons especially elderly people suffer from immunological dysfunction due to remodeling of lymphoid organs. They are prone to infections especially during outbreaks due to the lack of immunization and comorbid conditions. In India, there is a lack of national protocol and schedule for adult immunization though a few health societies publish different immunization guidelines with different recommendations. In order to protect adult and elderly people from VPDs especially during outbreaks, an universally

<sup>1-3</sup>Department of General Medicine, North 24 Parganas District Hospital, Kolkata, West Bengal, India

<sup>4</sup>Barjora Super Speciality Hospital, Bankura, West Bengal, India

**Corresponding Author:** Arnab Bhattacharyya, Department of General Medicine, North 24 Parganas District Hospital, Kolkata, West Bengal, India, Phone: +91 8910203905, e-mail: drarnab26@gmail.com

**How to cite this article:** Bhattacharyya A, De N, Sarkar S, *et al.* Hit the Iron When it is Red Hot. *Bengal Physician Journal* 2023;10(1):26.

**Source of support:** Nil

**Conflict of interest:** None

acceptable, accessible, and affordable immunization schedule is the need of the hour and for proper implementation of the program, training of health personnel and awareness generation among common people through health education is urgently required.

So in this context our approach should be “Hit the Iron When It Is Red Hot,” i.e., our endeavor should be the formation of a national health guideline for adult immunization, as the acceptability of the present adult population of India has probably increased to some extent as an after effect of mass vaccination against COVID-19. And for this to happen the health expenditure in the national budget should be increased, as India’s total healthcare spending (out-of-pocket and public) at 3.6% of gross domestic product (GDP), as per OECD (The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) is way lower than that of other countries and is also least among BRICS countries;<sup>3</sup> however, in the recent budget, the allocation in the health sector has been raised to 2.71%.

## REFERENCES

1. Demographics of India. Available from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics\\_of\\_India#:~:text=According%20to%20official%20estimates%20in,stood%20at%20over%201.4%20billion.&text=1%2C407%2C563%2C842%20\(2023%20est.\)&text=473.42%20people%20per.km2%20\(2021%20est.\)&text=0.68%25%20\(2022%20est.\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_India#:~:text=According%20to%20official%20estimates%20in,stood%20at%20over%201.4%20billion.&text=1%2C407%2C563%2C842%20(2023%20est.)&text=473.42%20people%20per.km2%20(2021%20est.)&text=0.68%25%20(2022%20est.)). Accessed on: 30 January 2023.
2. Dash R, Agrawal A, Nagvekar V, et al. Towards adult vaccination in India: A narrative literature review. *Hum Vaccin Immunother* 2020;16(4):991–1001. DOI: 10.1080/21645515.2019.1682842.
3. India’s economy needs big dose of health spending. *Mint* (livemint.com). Accessed on: 30 January 2023.