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MORBIDITY AND MORTALITY WEEKLY REPORT

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Disabilities Among Children Aged ≤ 17 Years — United States, 1991–1992

Disabilities among children result in substantial reductions in quality of life and are associated with increased dependence on the health-care and social-service systems. To assess the prevalence of disabilities and their associated health conditions among children, CDC reviewed data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) for 1991–1992, which collected information about chronic conditions, including the functional limitations related to those conditions (1,2). This report summarizes SIPP data for children aged ≤ 17 years.

From October 1991 through January 1992, SIPP collected information about disabilities during personal household interviews of a sample (n=97,133 persons in 34,100 households) of the U.S. civilian, noninstitutionalized population. Measures of disability were based on definitions from the *International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities, and Handicaps (ICIDH)* (3)*. The ICIDH extends the *International Classification of Diseases (ICD)* to include the personal and social consequences of diseases. Parents or legal guardians were asked about disabilities among their children aged ≤ 14 years. Children aged 15–17 years were asked directly about disabilities when they were available; however, for most children in this age group, information was obtained from their parents or guardians. For children reported to have a disability, parents were asked about the condition(s) that caused the functional limitation. Data were weighted to calculate national estimates representative of the U.S. population.

To ensure that the disability data were comprehensive and accounted for all developmental stages of children, the SIPP definitions of disability were varied by age group. For children aged 0–5 years, disability was defined as 1) limitation in the usual kind of activities done by most children the same age, or 2) receipt of therapy or diagnostic services by the child for developmental needs. For children aged ≥ 6 years, disability was any limitation in the ability to do regular school work. Additional indicators of disability included, for children aged 3–14 years, a long-lasting condition that limited the ability to walk, run, or use stairs, and for children aged 15–17 years,

*Based on the ICIDH, an impairment is an abnormality of an organ system, a disability is a person's limitation in function resulting from an impairment, and a handicap is the social consequence(s) or disadvantage(s) resulting from impairment and disability that a person experiences while interacting in the physical and social environment.

Disabilities Among Children — Continued

measures of problems in personal care, personal management (activities of daily living[†]), and the use of assistive aids (e.g., wheelchair).

During 1991–1992, an estimated 48.9 million persons (19.4% of the total U.S. population of 251.8 million) had a disability; of these, 3.8 million (7.9%) were aged ≤17 years (1). For children aged <3 years, the overall estimated prevalence of disabilities was 2.2%; for those aged 3–5 years, 5.2%; for those aged 6–14 years, 6.3%; and for those aged 15–17 years, 9.3% (Table 1). In all age groups, the prevalence of disabilities was higher among boys than girls; this sex-specific difference was greatest in the 6–14-year age group.

The condition most frequently reported as a cause of functional limitation among children aged ≤17 years was learning disability (29.5%), followed by speech problems (13.1%), mental retardation (6.8%), asthma (6.4%), and mental or emotional problems or disorders (6.3%) (Table 2).

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Editorial Note: In the United States, the impact of disabilities is disproportionately higher among children because disabilities with onset during childhood account for approximately one third of the years of disability[§] in the U.S. population (4). Improved characterization of the magnitude and distribution of disabilities among children is important to identify needed services and to target appropriate interventions. The findings in this report further document age and sex variations in the prevalence of disabilities among children. The increase in the prevalence of disabilities with advancing age probably reflects the ability to identify more readily academic or behavioral limitations among older children and variations in the way educational systems identify children limited in the ability to do regular school work (5). Reasons for sex-specific differences are unclear and require further study.

The approach used in this report to estimate the prevalence of disabilities was based on limitations in function resulting from chronic conditions rather than on the diagnosis of such conditions. Previous studies may have underestimated the prevalence of disabilities among children because the definitions were restricted to certain conditions (6). To improve the precision of estimates of disability, the SIPP definitions were broadened to include the functional consequences of chronic conditions. The inclusion of these functional limitations enables more accurate estimates of the prevalence of disabilities. However, the SIPP data are subject to at least two limitations. First, because children living in institutions or group homes were excluded from the study, the prevalence of disabilities among children probably is underestimated. Second, age-group-specific variations in the definitions of disability limit the basis for comparison across age groups.

In SIPP, health conditions associated with disabilities comprise a combination of diseases (e.g., asthma or diabetes), impairments (e.g., missing extremities or paralysis), and primary conditions considered to be disabilities (e.g., mental

[†]Ability to 1) "get around inside the home"; 2) "get in and out of bed or a chair"; 3) "take a bath or shower, dress, and eat;" and 4) "get to and use the toilet."

[§]Years of disability are calculated by multiplying the number of persons with new cases of disabilities by the expected lifespan of each person with a disability per year. Because years of disability reflect both prevalence and duration of disability, it is useful in assessing the impact of preventive interventions.

*Disabilities Among Children — Continued***TABLE 1. Number* and percentage of children aged ≤17 years with disabilities, by sex, age group, and criteria of the definition — Survey of Income and Program Participation, United States, 1991–1992[†]**

Age group/ Criteria of definition [§]	Male (n=33,879)		Female (n=32,256)		Total (n=66,135)	
	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
<3 yrs	(n=6,000)		(n=5,791)		(n=11,791)	
Limited in usual kind of activities	72	(1.2)	76	(1.3)	149	(1.3)
Received services for developmental needs	106	(1.8)	77	(1.3)	183	(1.6)
With autism/cerebral palsy/mental retardation	32	(0.5)	8	(0.1)	41	(0.4)
Total with a disability	133	(2.2)	121	(2.1)	254	(2.2)
3–5 yrs	(n= 5,946)		(n= 5,565)		(n=11,511)	
Limited in usual kind of activities	184	(3.1)	110	(2.0)	294	(2.6)
Received services for developmental needs	323	(5.4)	176	(3.2)	498	(4.3)
Limited in ability to walk, run, or use stairs	76	(1.3)	71	(1.3)	147	(1.3)
With autism/cerebral palsy/mental retardation	54	(0.9)	21	(0.4)	75	(0.7)
Total with a disability	370	(6.2)	228	(4.1)	597	(5.2)
6–14 yrs	(n=16,761)		(n=16,005)		(n=32,766)	
Limited in ability to do regular school work	1,197	(7.1)	567	(3.5)	1,764	(5.4)
Limited in ability to walk, run, or use stairs	301	(1.8)	223	(1.4)	524	(1.6)
With autism/cerebral palsy/mental retardation	250	(1.5)	163	(1.0)	412	(1.3)
Total with a disability	1,373	(8.2)	689	(4.3)	2,062	(6.3)
15–17 yrs	(n= 5,172)		(n= 4,895)		(n=10,067)	
Limited in ability to do regular school work	321	(6.2)	116	(2.4)	438	(4.4)
With autism/cerebral palsy/mental retardation [¶]	151	(3.1)	150	(3.1)	309	(3.1)
Total with a disability	558	(10.8)	374	(7.7)	933	(9.3)

*In thousands.

[†]Unweighted sample size=66,135.[§]Categories are not mutually exclusive.[¶]For these older children, this category includes additional measures of limitations in functional activity.

retardation or cerebral palsy). Efforts to improve the precision of national estimates of disabilities among children should distinguish between those impairments, disabilities, and handicaps that are consequences of the disabling process. One such effort is the 1999 revision of the ICIDH, which will emphasize measures of disability

*Disabilities Among Children — Continued***TABLE 2. Conditions reported as the cause of disability among children aged ≤ 17 years — Survey of Income and Program Participation, United States, 1991–1992**

Condition	No.*	(%)
Learning disability	1435	(29.5)
Speech problems	634	(13.1)
Mental retardation	331	(6.8)
Asthma	311	(6.4)
Mental or emotional problem or disorder	305	(6.3)
Blindness or vision problems	144	(3.0)
Cerebral palsy	129	(2.7)
Epilepsy or seizure disorder	128	(2.6)
Impairment deformity of back, side, foot, or leg	121	(2.5)
Deafness or serious trouble hearing	116	(2.4)
Tonsillitis or repeated ear infections	80	(1.6)
Hay fever or other respiratory allergies	76	(1.6)
Paralysis of any kind	73	(1.5)
Missing legs, feet, toes, arms, hands, or fingers	70	(1.4)
Autism	48	(1.0)
Drug or alcohol problem or disorder	48	(1.0)
Head or spinal cord injury	45	(0.9)
Heart trouble	44	(0.9)
Impairment deformity of finger, hand, or arm	27	(0.6)
Cancer	26	(0.5)
Diabetes	14	(0.3)
Other	653	(13.4)
Total	4858	(100.0)

*In thousands.

and handicap among children (7) and assist in standardizing collection of information about disabilities among children.

Improved estimates of the prevalence of disabilities and their associated health consequences among children are needed to develop and evaluate prevention strategies. Estimates based on analysis of data from SIPP can assist public health planners in identifying primary services for children with disabilities and in projecting long-range needs of these children. In addition, the linking of data about primary disabling conditions among children with the functional consequences of these conditions enables more precise estimation of costs required to meet the continuing needs of these children.

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State and National Vaccination Coverage Levels Among Children Aged 19–35 Months — United States, April–December 1994

The National Immunization Survey (NIS) is a single survey providing state and national estimates of vaccination coverage levels among children aged 19–35 months. CDC implemented the NIS in April 1994 as one element of the five-part Childhood Immunization Initiative (CII) (1), a national strategy to achieve and maintain high vaccination levels among children during the first 2 years of life. NIS collects quarterly data from the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and 27 urban areas considered to have populations at high risk for undervaccination. This report of initial NIS findings provides the results of both national and state vaccination coverage levels for April–December 1994.

The NIS uses a two-phase sample design. For the first phase, a quarterly random sample of telephone numbers for each survey area is called, and a screening questionnaire is administered to locate households with one or more children aged 19–35 months. Vaccination information is collected for age-eligible children. All respondents are requested to refer to written records. During April–December 1994, approximately 1.2 million telephone numbers were called, and 25,247 interviews were completed (an average of 110 interviews per area per quarter). The overall response rate for eligible households was 71% (range: 60%–88% among the individual states).

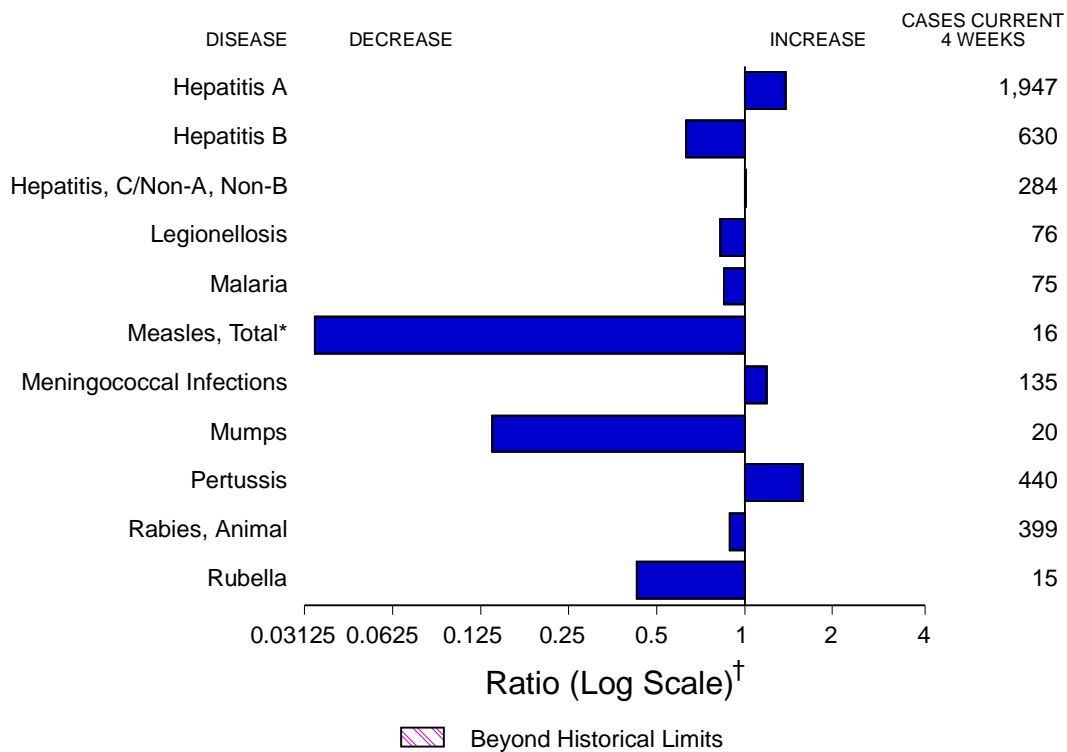
In the second phase, vaccination information is requested from health-care providers of children in surveyed households because parents tend to underestimate the number of doses received for multiple-dose vaccines and to overestimate coverage for single-dose vaccines (2,3). Households excluded from phase two include those that use records indicating their children received all of the recommended doses for at least four vaccines* because such recorded histories are highly accurate (CDC, unpublished data, 1995). Based on these exclusions, 18,479 (73%) households were eligible for phase two. Of these, vaccination information was obtained from providers for 7594 (41%) children. The demographic characteristics and the reported vaccination histories were similar for children in households with provider information and households with parental reports only.

Overall, 57% of the children in the survey had either written records of having received all of the required doses for at least four vaccines, or had vaccination information based on provider records. The data obtained from provider records were used to improve the accuracy of the vaccination coverage estimates for the

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*Vaccines in this series include four doses of diphtheria and tetanus toxoids and pertussis vaccine (DTP), three doses of poliovirus vaccine, one dose of measles-mumps-rubella vaccine (MMR), and three doses of *Haemophilus influenzae* type B vaccine (Hib). Children may or may not have received three doses of hepatitis B vaccine.

FIGURE I. Notifiable disease reports, comparison of 4-week totals ending August 19, 1995, with historical data — United States



*The large apparent decrease in the number of reported cases of measles (total) reflects dramatic fluctuations in the historical baseline.

[†]Ratio of current 4-week total to mean of 15 4-week totals (from previous, comparable, and subsequent 4-week periods for the past 5 years). The point where the hatched area begins is based on the mean and two standard deviations of these 4-week totals.

TABLE I. Summary — cases of specified notifiable diseases, United States, cumulative, week ending August 19, 1995 (33rd Week)

	Cum. 1995		Cum. 1995
Anthrax	-	Psittacosis	41
Brucellosis	56	Rabies, human	1
Cholera	11	Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever	295
Congenital rubella syndrome	4	Syphilis, congenital, age < 1 year [†]	132
Diphtheria	-	Tetanus	17
<i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> *	778	Toxic shock syndrome	123
Hansen Disease	86	Trichinosis	23
Plague	6	Typhoid fever	190
Poliomyelitis, Paralytic	-		

*Of 759 cases of known age, 180 (24%) were reported among children less than 5 years of age.

[†]Updated quarterly from reports to the Division of Sexually Transmitted Diseases and HIV Prevention, National Center for Prevention Services. This total through first quarter 1995.

-: no reported cases

TABLE III. Deaths in 121 U.S. cities,* week ending August 19, 1995 (33rd Week)

Table with columns: Reporting Area, All Causes, By Age (Years) (All Ages, ≥65, 45-64, 25-44, 1-24, <1), P&J† Total, Reporting Area, All Causes, By Age (Years) (All Ages, ≥65, 45-64, 25-44, 1-24, <1), P&J† Total.

*Mortality data in this table are voluntarily reported from 121 cities in the United States, most of which have populations of 100,000 or more. A death is reported by the place of its occurrence and by the week that the death certificate was filed. Fetal deaths are not included.

†Pneumonia and influenza.

‡Because of changes in reporting methods in these 3 Pennsylvania cities, these numbers are partial counts for the current week. Complete counts will be available in 4 to 6 weeks.

¶Total includes unknown ages.

U: Unavailable - : no reported cases

Vaccination Coverage Levels — Continued

entire sample. Standard two-phase estimation procedures (4) were used to estimate vaccination coverage for each surveyed area. The estimates were adjusted using natality data to create a weighted sample representative of children aged 19–35 months in the United States; in addition, adjustments were made for nonresponse and for exclusion of households without a telephone to account for the finding that children in households without telephones are less likely to be vaccinated than children in households with a telephone (CDC, unpublished data, 1995) (5).

Based on the NIS, among children who were born during May 1991– May 1993 and who were aged 19–35 months (median: 27 months) when surveyed, estimated vaccination coverage was 75% (confidence interval [CI]=±1.2%) for receipt of at least four doses of diphtheria and tetanus toxoids and pertussis vaccine (DTP), three doses of poliovirus vaccine, and one dose of measles-mumps-rubella vaccine (MMR) (4:3:1 series) (Table 1). However, except for hepatitis B, coverage levels for each of the vaccines individually were substantially higher: coverage with three or more doses of DTP was >90%; coverage for one dose of MMR, three or more doses of polio, and three or more doses of *Haemophilus influenzae* type B vaccine (Hib) ranged from 83% to 89%. The lower overall coverage for the 4:3:1 series was accounted for primarily by low coverage for the fourth dose of DTP (77%).

State-specific estimated coverage levels for the 4:3:1 series ranged from 61% (CI=±6.2%) to 88% (CI=±4.6%) (Table 2). Coverage levels were <65% in three states,

TABLE 1. Vaccination coverage levels among children aged 19–35 months, by selected vaccines — United States, 1994

Vaccine/Dose	1996 Goal	NHIS*		NHIS provider†		NIS‡	
		%	(95% CI¶)	%	(95% CI)	%	(95% CI)
DTP/DT**							
≥3 Doses	90%	89	(±2.4)	93	(±2.2)	93	(±0.7)
≥4 Doses	—	69	(±3.0)	76	(±3.4)	77	(±1.1)
Poliovirus							
≥3 Doses	90%	78	(±2.7)	83	(±3.0)	83	(±1.0)
<i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> type b							
≥3 Doses	90%	73	(±3.1)	89	(±2.6)	86	(±0.9)
Measles-containing (MCV)							
≥3 Doses	90%	91	(±1.8)	88	(±3.8)	89	(±0.9)
Hepatitis B††							
≥3 Doses	70%	27	(±3.5)	17	(±2.8)	37	(±1.2)
Combined series							
4 DTP/3 Polio/1 MCV§§	—	67	(±3.1)	72	(±3.4)	75	(±1.2)

* 1994 National Health Interview Survey, January–June.

† 1994 National Health Interview Survey, January–June, with provider data.

‡ 1994 National Immunization Survey, April–December.

¶ Confidence interval.

** Diphtheria and tetanus toxoids and pertussis vaccine/Diphtheria and tetanus toxoids.

†† The difference between the NIS and NHIS provider estimates for hepatitis B is primarily because of different time periods for the surveys and the rapid improvement in hepatitis B coverage during 1994.

§§ Four doses of DTP/DT, three doses of poliovirus vaccine, and one dose of MCV.

*Vaccination Coverage Levels — Continued***TABLE 2. Estimated vaccination coverage with the 4:3:1 series,* by state — National Immunization Survey, United States, April–December 1994**

State	Sample size	4:3:1 Series coverage	
		%	(95% CI†)
Alabama	622	75	(±6.1)
Alaska	318	73	(±6.9)
Arizona	649	77	(±4.8)
Arkansas	345	71	(±6.9)
California	1,304	74	(±4.9)
Colorado	331	75	(±7.2)
Connecticut	329	86	(±5.6)
Delaware	309	81	(±6.6)
District of Columbia	277	73	(±8.8)
Florida	915	76	(±6.2)
Georgia	620	79	(±5.7)
Hawaii	340	86	(±5.7)
Idaho	313	64	(±7.4)
Illinois	644	68	(±6.0)
Indiana	642	74	(±5.7)
Iowa	309	81	(±6.0)
Kansas	309	82	(±5.6)
Kentucky	342	80	(±6.1)
Louisiana	636	71	(±6.6)
Maine	302	82	(±6.0)
Maryland	633	79	(±5.4)
Massachusetts	633	82	(±5.3)
Michigan	624	61	(±6.2)
Minnesota	318	81	(±5.6)
Mississippi	331	83	(±6.1)
Missouri	317	64	(±7.5)
Montana	321	75	(±6.3)
Nebraska	325	72	(±6.6)
Nevada	322	69	(±8.0)
New Hampshire	295	83	(±6.0)
New Jersey	603	71	(±7.2)
New Mexico	326	73	(±7.4)
New York	639	77	(±5.1)
North Carolina	355	84	(±5.8)
North Dakota	326	81	(±5.0)
Ohio	970	73	(±5.2)
Oklahoma	319	76	(±7.2)
Oregon	321	71	(±6.9)
Pennsylvania	640	77	(±5.1)
Rhode Island	316	82	(±5.9)
South Carolina	328	84	(±5.7)
South Dakota	329	74	(±6.7)
Tennessee	972	74	(±4.6)
Texas	1,733	71	(±4.3)
Utah	472	70	(±5.6)
Vermont	312	88	(±4.6)
Virginia	327	81	(±6.4)
Washington	712	74	(±4.9)
West Virginia	312	66	(±8.3)
Wisconsin	647	76	(±5.1)
Wyoming	313	78	(±5.7)
Total	25,247	75	(±1.2)

* Four doses of diphtheria and tetanus toxoids and pertussis vaccine, three doses of poliovirus vaccine, and one dose of measles-mumps-rubella vaccine.

† Confidence interval.

Vaccination Coverage Levels — Continued

≥85% in three states, and were higher in the northeastern and southeastern regions (Figure 1).

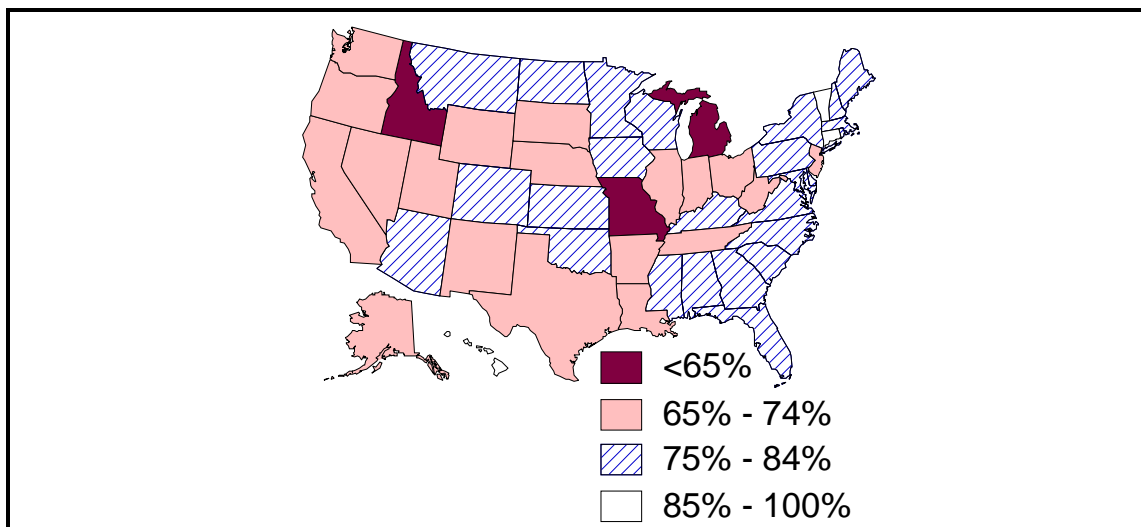
To assess the validity of estimates from the NIS, findings were compared with previously reported data from the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) (6,7), a national household survey of the U.S. civilian, noninstitutionalized population. For January–June 1994, NHIS data had been supplemented with provider information in the same manner as in the NIS survey. The estimated coverage level of 75% in the NIS survey was similar to the 72% estimate obtained from the NHIS, and vaccine coverage levels for each individual vaccine (except for hepatitis B) were nearly identical (Table 1). In addition, estimates of vaccination coverage derived independently by selected states for 1994 were similar to those reported in the NIS (CDC, unpublished data, 1995).

Reported by: National Center for Health Statistics; Assessment Br, Data Management Div, National Immunization Program, CDC.

Editorial Note: The NIS data provide the first current, population-based, state-specific estimates of vaccination coverage produced by a standard methodology for the United States. These findings enable valid comparisons of state efforts to deliver vaccination services. The NIS has obtained the most reliable estimates of vaccination coverage through the use of health-care provider records and the use of data from the NHIS to adjust for households without telephones. The estimate of the coverage for the 4:3:1 series based on NIS (75%) was substantially higher than that previously reported through the NHIS (67%), probably reflecting improvements in the accuracy of both NIS and NHIS data with the inclusion of information from providers rather than a true increase in coverage. CDC will continue to assess and improve the quality of national vaccination data.

The vaccination coverage rates reported in the NIS and in recent reports from the NHIS are the highest ever recorded in the United States. In particular, the findings in the NIS indicate that the CII goal for 90% coverage with three doses of DTP was

FIGURE 1. Estimated vaccination coverage with the 4:3:1 series,* by state — National Immunization Survey, United States, April–December 1994



*Four doses of diphtheria and tetanus toxoids and pertussis vaccine, three doses of poliovirus vaccine, and one dose of measles-mumps-rubella vaccine.

Vaccination Coverage Levels — Continued

exceeded, and that the 90% coverage goals for polio, measles, and Hib were nearly attained (1). Coverage for hepatitis B, the vaccine most recently added to the pediatric schedule, was the lowest because many children were born before the recommendations for vaccination were made.

Coverage for four doses of DTP is the lowest of the three vaccines included in the combined series. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recently reaffirmed its recommendation for a fourth dose of DTP for all children aged 12–18 months (8). Efforts to ensure timely administration of the fourth dose of DTP vaccine must be intensified to further reduce the incidence of pertussis and should include simultaneous administration with other vaccines recommended for children aged 12–18 months.

The substantial variation in state-specific coverage levels for the 4:3:1 series underscores the need for vaccination efforts targeted at children aged <2 years; in addition, more than one million children still lack one or more doses of the recommended vaccines. One of the national health objectives for the year 2000 is to achieve series-complete coverage for at least 90% of 2-year-old children for all recommended vaccines[†] (objective 20.11) (9). Implementation of the five-part CII strategy will be essential to meet this goal and to build a national system that maintains high coverage levels.

Potential limitations of NIS include the possible biases associated with exclusion of households without telephones, household nonresponse, and inaccurate reporting from households and small sample sizes for some states. An adjustment for exclusion of households without telephones was made to account for findings in the 1992–1993 NHIS that coverage levels for the 4:3:1 series are approximately 10 percentage points lower among children in households without telephones (CDC, unpublished data, 1995). Although provider information was not available for all children, those children whose providers were not included in the survey were similar to children whose provider was included, suggesting that use of provider data did not introduce a bias. In addition, estimates based on small sample sizes have a larger variance; future analyses will include data for four quarters, thereby reducing the size of the sampling error.

CDC will use the NIS, with data from the NHIS, to evaluate progress toward national vaccination goals and, because of the comparability of the information in the NIS, to identify states with the highest rates (whose programs may be models for other states) and states with lower rates (which may need special attention). These coverage estimates are being used to distribute \$33 million in incentive funds, with the greatest funding per fully vaccinated child to states that achieve the highest levels of coverage.

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[†]Series-complete coverage of all currently recommended vaccines include four doses of DTP, three doses of polio, one dose of MMR, and three doses each of Hib and hepatitis B vaccine.

Vaccination Coverage Levels — Continued

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