VACCINE SAFETY NET
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WHAT IS THE VACCINE SAFETY NET (VSN)?

The WHO established VACCINE SAFETY NET is a worldwide network of websites that provide reliable information on vaccine safety on the web.
VSN GOALS

- To **facilitate** easy access to reliable, understandable, evidence-based information on the safety of vaccines for internet users, regardless of their geographic location and language.

- To **collaborate** at an international level to increase awareness about vaccines, reduce vaccine hesitancy and strengthen confidence in vaccines by:
  - seeking to better understand internet users’ needs, behaviours and preferences;
  - providing reliable information tailored to users’ needs;
  - communicating vaccine safety information through a diversity of digital channels.
VSN BACKGROUND

- Established in 2003 to counterbalance groups using the internet to question the utility of vaccination and websites providing unbalanced, misleading and alarming vaccine safety information
- A global network of websites, assessed by WHO, that provides reliable information on vaccine safety worldwide
- Key player: the GACVS, who defined the criteria for good information practices against which each website is evaluated
EVALUATION OF WEBSITES

- Websites are evaluated based on established criteria related to:
  - Website’s credibility and content (mandatory)
  - Website’s accessibility and design (desired)

- Process: candidate organizations can self-nominate or be nominated

- Preliminary screening: inclusion versus exclusion criteria
  - **INCLUSION:** must meet 6 criteria, such as 1. Public health focus 2. If registration is required, must be free 3. Contain vaccine safety information 4. Contain evidence-based information 5. Provides balanced information – as defined by VSN: “unbiased information that presents all reasonable sides of a controversial issue in a fair way.” 6. Professional in its presentation (writing, structure, navigation)
  - **EXCLUSION:** Corporate websites and websites that are not updated regularly are excluded.
  - **FORMAL SCREENING:** Completed by experimented assessors and monitored by the VSN Secretariat
QUICK FACTS ABOUT THE NETWORK

- The VSN network: **75 websites**, from **34 countries** across **6 WHO regions**, providing information in **24 languages**

- **20 candidates** websites have been evaluated lately:
  - ✓ **9** are working on the implementation of their recommendations (Israel, Philippines, Switzerland, Tanzania, Turkey x 2, USA, Uzbekistan, Zimbabwe)
  - ✓ **11** requested additional time to implement recommendations (Albania, Estonia, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Tanzania x2)

- **1 additional** websites requested to join: Poland
**VSN OUTREACH September 2019**

VSN members: 75 from 34 countries providing reliable vaccine safety information in 24 languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>N° of websites</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
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<td>Belgium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
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<td>Brazil</td>
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<td>Canada</td>
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<td>Chile</td>
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<td>China</td>
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<td>Croatia</td>
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<td>European Union*</td>
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<td>Ireland</td>
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<td>Italy</td>
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<td>Kingdom of Bahrain</td>
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<td>Mexico</td>
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<td>Poland</td>
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<td>Portugal</td>
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<td>Slovenia</td>
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<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>United States of America</td>
<td>10</td>
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VSN BASED ACTIVITIES

• VSN Visual identity
  – ongoing inclusion on members homepage, participate to cross linking strategy to improving Google ranking of VSN members’ websites

• Portal management
  – Members knowledge and information sharing
  – Collaboration on topics of interest
  – Members’ user survey and redesign plan

• Research projects
  – Web analytics
  – Plan for ongoing opinion surveys implemented across the Network

• Partnerships with global digital platforms
  – VSN referenced by Pinterest

• Innovation hub
  – Development of a vaccine safety chatbot

• Multilanguage roster of scientific reviewers
  – Call for volunteers to assist with evaluation of candidates

• Partners’ collaborations
  – VSN-CDC digital vaccine safety information package
  – GAVI Be:Cause

• VSN & Social media
  @VaccineSafetyN
VSN VISUAL IDENTITY

PURPOSE

- **Signal** to visitors that the website meets the Vaccine Safety Net criteria
- **Promote** the Network and its members

USE

- Solely owned by the World Health Organization
- Can only be used by organizations whose websites have been validated by WHO as meeting the GACVS criteria for good information practices
VSN Social Media – @VaccineSafetyN

- Dedicated to communicating about the facts and benefits of vaccines by identifying local trustworthy information in different languages.
- The accredited symbol for reliable vaccine information online.
The portal serves as the VSN's hub on the Internet with the following characteristics/goals:

- A portal with a combined public and members-only area of the website.
- Present and promote VSN
- Present, promote and support the VSN members and their work
- Facilitate and encourage exchange and collaboration among VSN members and relevant stakeholders
VSN WEB ANALYTICS PROJECT

- Start implementation: May 2017
- First report: November 2017
- Websites contributing: 30
- Call for new contributors
- Discuss way forward

Collect, manage, analyze, interpret, formulate and propose to WHO and VSN members data driven vaccine safety information and communication strategies
WHY SHOULD I JOIN?

• My website will be assessed by WHO against **GACVS criteria for good information practices** and recommendations will contribute to enhance my website’s as per the latest standards.

• As member of the VSN, **my website will be listed on the WHO website and the VSN portal** (credibility & visibility) and regularly **be promoted on social media** through the @VaccineSafetyN twitter account.

• I will be allowed to display the VSN banner as seal of verified vaccine safety information – posting this banner on my homepage will contribute to a **cross-linking strategy, which affects the ranking of my website on google search**.

• As member of the VSN, I will have **access to centralized, most up to date, vaccine safety information** that I will be able to re-use on my own website and share it with my audience.

• As member of the VSN, I will be able to **exchange with worldwide stakeholders, have access to the latest best practices and guidance** on how best communicate the safety of vaccine, participate in network-based projects on vaccine safety information and communication strategies.