Introduction

• Immunization is a growing program in Uganda with performance levels that have varied over the years.
• The Ministry of Health recently asked Uganda's National Immunization Technical Advisory Groups for advice on the introduction of new vaccines to the routine immunization schedule.

Objective of Internship

I embarked on this internship to gain a deeper and personal understanding of the crossroads at which politics and healthcare lie, an area of major interest to me as a pre-medical, politics student.

Work Profile

• The Uganda National Academy of Sciences is an independent body of scientists that provides government and society with research based evidence.
• UNAS guides the UNITAG, Uganda National Technical Advisory Groups as they advise the Minister of Health on the introduction of new vaccines.
• I assisted the senior research associate and secretary of UNAS.

Reflection

• I conducted a stakeholder analysis on various actors in the immunization sector in Uganda and internationally.
• The purpose of this analysis was to help UNAS and UNITAG gain a stronger understanding of the current interests, influence and support levels of these actors for the addition of new vaccines to Uganda's routine immunization schedule.

• I interviewed representatives from many international organizations, such as Gavi, the CDC and WHO to assess their current goals for improving global health.
• During these interviews, I was also offered a closer glimpse into the nature of the interactions between individuals in healthcare and science legislators.

• In addition to my engagements with legislators, health care practitioners, and scientists, I had the opportunity to interact with nurses who vaccinate children in clinics. It was through these interactions that I first-handly witnessed some of the hidden difficulties and problems facing the immunization program in Uganda.
• As I conducted this stakeholder analysis, I was exposed to the problems that faced countries as they worked to both create and implement effective and beneficial immunization policies.

Looking ahead

• My experience in Kampala has led me to continue to think about the many factors countries must consider as they contemplate adding new health policies.

Questions

• How can other countries’ vaccine policies influence developing countries? Are there certain practices developing countries can use from countries with successful immunization programs?

Conclusion

I have gained a deeper understanding and larger perspective on the issues facing developing countries as they create and improve their immunization programs. While it can be useful for countries to emulate other successful countries’ immunization programs, each country must consider its particular conditions.

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