



Ball of Life – A Step towards Preventing Pneumococcal Disease

Sign your name on the Ball of Life and pledge against Pneumococcal Disease

KUALA LUMPUR, 23 November 2012 – In recognition of the serious consequences of pneumococcal disease – a devastating disease which often leads to death and disabilities – Pfizer Malaysia has in recent months embarked on several initiatives aimed at increasing the level of awareness on the disease and to highlight the importance of its prevention amongst Malaysians, one of which is the Ball of Life.

The Ball of Life is a zorb ball which over a span of three weeks, made its way to several locations in and around the city, to call on the public to pledge their support in preventing pneumococcal disease and to educate them on the different facets of the disease. Beginning its journey on the 18th of October at One Utama, the ball then moved to Lot 10 the following week and then on to the final location at Sunway Pyramid on the 1st of November.

The Ball of Life provides the public with the chance to contribute towards ensuring that our children and elderly are well-protected against pneumococcal disease and educating and creating awareness on the disease as it has yet to gain the recognition it deserves. With the simple act of signing the Ball of Life, the public would have pledged their support towards combating this disease and with each signature received; Pfizer Malaysia will make a contribution to the Lung Foundation of Malaysia, which will then go towards promoting research to aid in preventing the onset of pneumococcal disease. This initiative is a part of the 'Moments that Matter' campaign launched by Pfizer to highlight the importance of protecting the precious moments between the elderly and the young. By taking active steps towards preventing the onset of Pneumococcal Disease, we can ensure that there are many more happy moment to be shared by families around the world.

The Ball of Life initiative has met and exceeded its initial target of 3,000 signatures, with a donation of RM 5 per pledge. The overwhelming support has resulted in 11,476 pledges which demonstrate the public support against Pneumococcal Disease. "We are truly excited by the positive response from the public and their support for the awareness of Pneumococcal Disease. The contribution by Pfizer Malaysia through the public's pledges will go a long way towards creating strides in Pneumococcal Disease research and more public awareness initiatives." said Dato' Dr. Zainudin Md. Zin, Chairman of the Lung Foundation of Malaysia.

Pneumococcal Disease is a complex group of illnesses caused by the bacterium *Streptococcus pneumoniae*.¹ This bacterium causes invasive infections which include bacteraemia/sepsis (bacterial

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Invasive pneumococcal disease in children 5 years after conjugate vaccine introduction-eight states, 1998-2005. *Morb Mortal Wkly Rep.* 2008;57:144-148.

infections of the blood), meningitis (inflammation of the membrane surrounding the spinal cord or brain), pneumonia (lung inflammation) and otitis media (media ear infection).²

The World Health Organization has estimated that pneumococcal disease kills approximately 0.7-1 million children younger than 5 years of age every year.³ Globally, annual Pneumococcal Disease incidence is estimated at 14.5 million episodes of serious Pneumococcal Disease in children younger than five years of age⁴. The elderly are not exempt from this disease as they have been noted to be the group hardest hit by pneumonia each year. In 2002 close to 65,000 people died from pneumonia, 90 percent of those deaths were in those 65 years or older⁵.

Asia has the highest pneumococcal disease, including invasive disease and non-invasive burden in the world with more than half of pneumococcal disease episodes occurring in Asia alone.⁵ Despite the alarming prevalence of the disease, it still continues to be under-recognised, highlighting the importance of being aware of the impact of the disease and to mobilise individuals to do their bit in ensuring that all Malaysians have access to a life free of pneumococcal disease.

“We recognise the significant disease burden in this country and are fully committed to continuously create awareness so that more Malaysians can be protected against Pneumococcal Disease. There has been an overwhelming support to the Ball of Life initiative and we are ecstatic to note that Malaysians are becoming aware of the importance of preventing the disease. We are glad to contribute to the Lung Foundation of Malaysia as a result of this initiative as this will assist the non-profit organisation to improve its disease awareness programs, standard of care and treatment of patients with lung disease,” said Noor Yang Azwar Kamarudin, Director of Public Affairs of Pfizer Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei at the launch of Pfizer’s Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine, which has since been indicated for adults 50 years of age and older for immunisation for the prevention of invasive Pneumococcal.

About Prevenar 13 and Conjugate Technology

It uses a conjugate technology that links pneumococcal polysaccharide sugar chains found on the surface of each bacterial serotype with a carrier protein. Prevenar 13 uses the carrier protein CRM₁₉₇, which has more than 20 years of clinical and commercial use in vaccines. Prevenar 13 is not intended to be used for treatment of active infection.

Pneumococcal Disease

Pneumococcal disease is a group of infections caused by the bacterium *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, also known as pneumococcus. The most common manifestation of PD in adults 50 years of age and older is

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Prevention of Pneumococcal disease: recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). *MMWR*. 1997;46(RR-8):1-24

³ The World Health Organization. Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine for Childhood Immunization – WHO Position Paper. *Weekly Epidemiological Record*. Vol 82, No 12: 93-104

⁴ The World Health Organization. Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine for Childhood Immunization – WHO Position Paper. *Weekly Epidemiological Record*. Vol 82, No 12: 93-104

⁵ Adapted from “Pneumonia Vaccine for At risk Groups”. Available at: <http://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=40585>. Accessed on 24 August 2012.

non-bacteremic pneumococcal pneumonia, a non-invasive form of the disease. PD also causes invasive infections, such as bacteremia and meningitis, in adults.

About Pfizer Malaysia

Pfizer Malaysia is committed towards Working Together for a Healthier World™. We apply our global resources and strive to set the standard for quality, safety and value of medicines to improve the health and well-being of Malaysians at every stage of life. Our diversified health care portfolio includes human biologic, small molecule medicines and vaccines in Biopharmaceuticals, as well as a wide range of Nutritional products.

We also collaborate closely with public and private health care providers, and communities to support and expand access to reliable, affordable health care in Malaysia. Pfizer Malaysia began operations in 1964, and every day, some 500 colleagues throughout the country work to advance wellness and make a difference for all who rely on us.

Wyeth is now a wholly owned subsidiary of Pfizer Inc. The merger of Wyeth Malaysia and Pfizer Malaysia entities may be pending in various jurisdictions and integration is subject to completion of various local legal and regulatory obligations.

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