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ASIA/PAKISTAN - Every year, 87,000 children die from preventable diseases

Karachi (Agenzia Fides) - In Pakistan, about 435,000 annual deaths of children under five years of age, 20% die of polio, pneumonia, tuberculosis, measles, tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis and hepatitis B, all preventable diseases (VPD) with vaccine. On the occasion of World Immunization Week, which is celebrated every year in the last week of April with the aim of highlighting the importance of prevention through vaccination and make parents aware of the dangers of these diseases and the benefits of the remedies available, dr. Iqbal, president of the Pakistan Paediatrics Association (PPA), urged parents to vaccinate their children in medical centers around the country. Unlike other Asian countries, where vaccination campaigns have saved the lives of many children and eliminated many infectious diseases, the situation in Pakistan continues to be dangerous, especially due to ignorance and lack of awareness. In Pakistan, in fact, much of the population is not aware and does not care to protect the young through appropriate vaccinations, despite the availability of free facilities, is what Iqbal said in a statement. The government, together with the private sector, has created across the country about 7000 Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI), prevention centers for infectious diseases, and provided free doses in different parts of the city. Unfortunately, despite the fact that the EPI program has been active for 40 years, only 20 - 50% of Pakistanis are aware of the availability of free vaccines. (AP) (Agenzia Fides 25/04/2013)

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