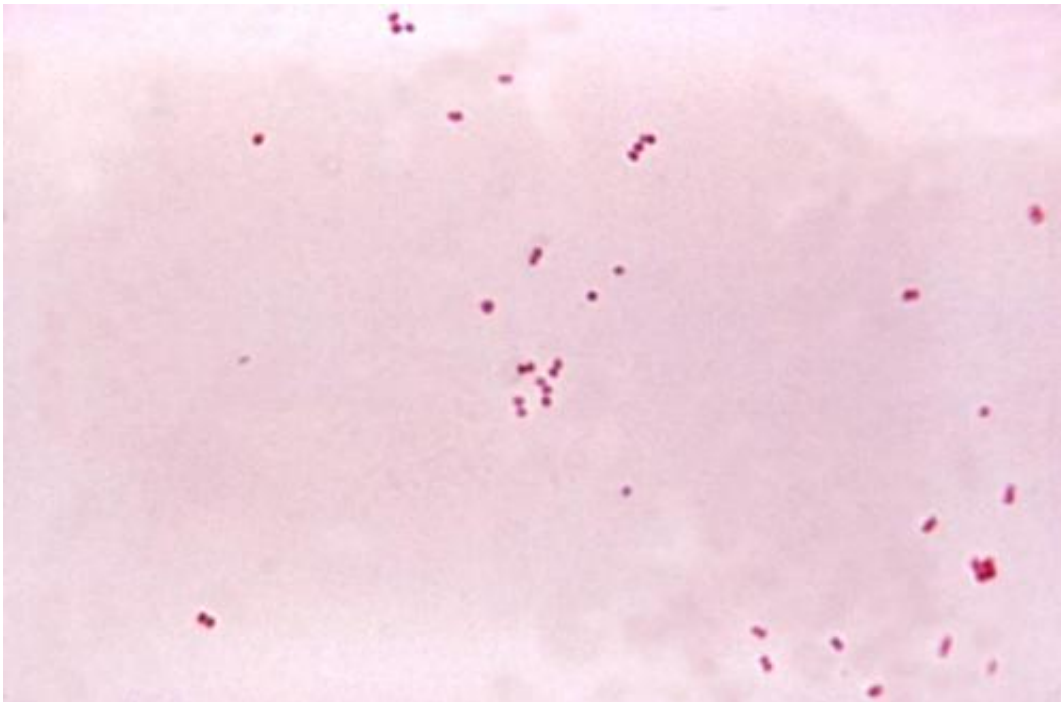


Niger launches campaign to protect 6 mn children from meningitis

March 5 2019



Gram stain of meningococci from a culture showing Gram negative (pink) bacteria, often in pairs. Credit: public domain

The impoverished Sahel state of Niger on Tuesday launched a campaign to vaccinate six million children against meningitis, which killed nearly 200 people two years ago.

Children aged between one and seven years will be immunised over the week-long nationwide programme, Health Minister Idi Illiassou said.

He called on parents to "massively" support the effort.

The two-billion-CFA-franc (three-million-euro, \$3.4-million) cost is being mainly borne by the World Health Organization (WHO), GAVI Alliance, Rotary International and the UN [children's](#) fund, Unicef.

Niger lies in the so-called "[meningitis belt](#)" of sub-Saharan Africa, stretching from Senegal in the west to Ethiopia in the east, where outbreaks of the disease are a regular occurrence.

The vaccination programme in Niger is against meningitis A, one of the six groups of meningitis bacteria that can cause epidemics.

The disease is transmitted between people through coughs and sneezes, close contact and cramped living conditions.

The illness causes acute inflammation of the outer layers of the brain and [spinal cord](#), with the most common symptoms being fever, headache and neck stiffness.

© 2019 AFP

Citation: Niger launches campaign to protect 6 mn children from meningitis (2019, March 5) retrieved 26 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-03-niger-campaign-mn-children-meningitis.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.