

## Pfizer Singapore drives expert dialogue on innovative strategies to tackle respiratory diseases

September 25, 2024 | Analysis

**Pfizer gathered a panel of medical experts from various specialty areas to raise awareness on the evolving nature of respiratory conditions, virus mutations and variants**



Pfizer Singapore organized a media roundtable to advocate for greater awareness on respiratory diseases and introduce the importance of a lifecourse approach to vaccine protections for those most at risk in the country.

These initiatives underscore Pfizer's commitment to safeguard public health across Singapore. In Singapore, respiratory infections due to Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), pneumococcal disease, and COVID-19 pose significant public health challenges due to their potential to cause severe disease, particularly in vulnerable populations like infants, older adults, and individuals with underlying health conditions.

As seen over the past few years, acute respiratory infections are expected to rise during the year end.

Dr Sean Michael Gardiner, Cluster Medical Lead, Malaysia-IndonesiaSingapore-Philippines (MISP), Pfizer Emerging Markets Asia explains "Cross sectoral partnerships including with the government signify our commitment to ensuring swift and effective protection in those that need it most while improving patient outcomes and quality of life, so they can live independently."

### **Shielding the vulnerable and Boosting defense through broad-spectrum protection:**

RSV is highly contagious and circulates throughout Singapore year-round, causing upper and lower respiratory tract infections in people of all ages, particularly infants and the elderly. Prevention strategies that include vaccinations are therefore crucial in reducing severity of illness.

Building on the importance of vaccinations, pneumonia — also known as the inflammation of the lungs — is the third major cause of death in Singapore. A pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) can provide protection against the more common strains of the *Streptococcus pneumoniae* bacteria and play a key role in reducing the respiratory disease burden among vulnerable groups and those with chronic illnesses. The greater the number of serotypes included in the PCV, the wider the protection coverage will be for the recipients.

**Staying ahead of variants:** In the context of emerging new variants, staying up to date on COVID-19 vaccinations in line with the Ministry of Health (MOH) recommendations remains important, given that COVID-19 cases may be on the rise towards

the end of the year, which marks the travel season.

As immunity weakens from vaccine fatigue and hesitancy, a key issue addressed at the roundtable discussion was on the importance of a life-course approach to immunization. The roundtable, moderated by Professor Tikki Pangestu, Visiting Professor from the National University of Singapore, brought together a panel of medical experts from various specialty areas to discuss the evolving nature of respiratory conditions, virus mutations and variants and why comprehensive protection across one's life span is the key to greater strength and independence individually and as a community.

"In navigating the complexities of respiratory conditions and virus mutations, it's crucial to understand that comprehensive protection across one's lifespan is the key to living with strength and independence. This strategy empowers individuals and fortifies the community as a whole," said Professor Tikki Pangestu, Visiting Professor from the National University of Singapore.