

Press Release | Latest IFA Study Highlights Gaps and Opportunities for a Life Course Approach in NITAGs

Toronto, Ontario – The International Federation on Ageing (IFA) is pleased to release the findings of its latest study, *Mobilizing Evidence to Support a Life Course Approach Within National Immunization Technical Advisory Groups (NITAGs)*. The study illustrates that while the value and importance of adult vaccination are often well-recognized by NITAGs, restrictions on government investment and competing health priorities continue to leave at-risk groups of older adults and those with chronic medical conditions underserved.

NITAGs are multidisciplinary, country-level expert committees tasked with providing evidence-based advice to national policymakers on immunization and vaccine policy issues. A 2023 review of the NITAGs revealed alarming gaps in the transparency of publicly available information on governance, operational mechanisms, and recommendation processes. Further investigation into the composition of NITAG members also exhibited little to no representation from the field of ageing to support the needs of older populations.

Building on this review, the IFA's new study, *Mobilizing Evidence to Support a Life Course Approach Within NITAGs*, gathered insights into the status, challenges, and opportunities related to implementing a life course approach within NITAGs, through key informant interviews with stakeholders and subject matter experts involved in NITAGs. This body of research was fundamental to identifying knowledge gaps in order to formulate evidence-informed recommendations and a *Framework for Action* for Member States, civil society organizations (CSOs), governments, and other stakeholders in adopting and advocating for the representation of a life course approach within global NITAGs.

The challenges and barriers to prioritizing a life course approach within NITAGs, as identified in this study, comes at a critical time. The year 2025 marks the midpoint of the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing - an urgent call for concerted whole-of-government and whole-of-society collaboration and action to improve the lives of older people, their families, and the communities in which they live. In parallel, the WHO's Immunization Agenda 2030 sets out an ambitious vision in Strategic Priority 4 "Life Course and Integration", which calls for immunization strategies that respond to changing demographic trends, including improved access to vaccines at all ages through better integration within primary health care to prevent disability and functional decline. Supporting a life course approach within NITAGs represents a significant, yet often missed, opportunity to build and strengthen these bridges - especially when viewed through the lens of the four action areas and enablers of the Decade.

Mobilizing Evidence to Support a Life Course Approach Within NITAGs is an in-depth study conducted to help inform and strengthen the structure and functioning of NITAGs. The research provides advocacy strategies, policy recommendations, and a Framework for Action to advance healthy ageing, prevent disease, and improve health and social systems - particularly in the context of ageing populations and overburdened health systems.

To learn more about the *Mobilizing Evidence to Support a Life Course Approach Within NITAGs* study visit: <https://ow.ly/VHSu50W9aUc>.