

## **Precarious and migrant people must be vaccinated against Covid-19**

Press release of the French National Academy of Medicine

June 25, 2021

The fight against the Covid-19 pandemic is universal. In France, it must include all population groups and pay particularly attention to the poorest and least visible. Very early on, the French National Academy of Medicine issued recommendations concerning migrant people [1] and more generally people living in precarious conditions [2]. The miserable living conditions and the difficulties encountered in accessing to preventive and curative care increase the exposure of these people to SARS-CoV-2 infection. Long before Covid-19 pandemic, the French National Academy of Medicine had denounced the worsening relations between precariousness, poverty and health [3], and more specifically the health and social situation in France of people with an immigrant background [4]. It is deplorable to note the absence or insignificance of data concerning migrants, whether these are epidemiological indicators of SARS-CoV-2 infection or vaccination coverage against Covid-19. Moreover, migrants live in uncomfortable and crowded conditions that make barrier gestures and access to water or hydroalcoholic gel improbable, favoring the rapid spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and its variants. The true burden of Covid-19 in these uninformed communities with a little awareness of the symptoms, a little knowledge of the medical options available and generally no social protection, is unknown. Initiatives have been taken to vaccinate these populations, thanks to the action of local authorities, volunteer associations or social emergency services (SAMU), but they remain punctual, disparate and overall insufficient. It is therefore important to deploy human and financial resources specifically dedicated to all public, private and associative medical and social centers, and general practitioners, in order to extend the vaccination campaign to all migrants throughout the country, as the vaccination policy must be inclusive to be effective. In agreement with the Human Rights Defender and the President of the French National Consultative Ethics Committee, **the French National Academy of Medicine** recommends

- to include all migrants in the epidemiological monitoring of Covid-19 and of the national vaccination campaign;
- to recruit interpreters to carry out large-scale information and awareness-raising campaigns on vaccination among these populations without possible access to public health messages;
- to systematically combine vaccination against Covid-19 with the vaccination catch up recommended by the HAS for the newcomer migrants [5];
- to provide medico-social centers and associations working with precarious and migrant people, refugees and asylum seekers with the human and technical resources needed to vaccinate under the best conditions of safety and dignity;
- to promote vaccination campaigns by mobile teams operating in camps and accommodation places for migrants.

1. Press release of the National Academy of Medicine “Homeless, illegal immigrants and confined?” March 26, 2020
2. Press release of the French National Academy of Medicine and the National Academy of Pharmacy "Precariousness: an increased risk of Covid-19", June 21, 2020
3. Report of the French National Academy of Medicine “Precarity, poverty and health”, June 20, 2017
4. Report of the French National Academy of Medicine "Immigration in France: health and social situation", February 26, 2020
5. HAS “Catch-up vaccination in practice among newly arrived migrants. Examples in case of unknown, incomplete or incompletely known immunisation status", January 29, 2020

.