

# Polio resurgence and vaccination campaigns in Pakistan: A statistical overview

By  
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## Introduction

Did you know that Poliomyelitis, also known as polio, is a transmissible disease that mainly affects children below the age of five? Caused by the deadly poliovirus, a minority of the cases show irreversible paralysis, neck stiffness, headache, and loss of superficial and deep reflexes, ultimately leading to death, while the majority are asymptomatic. Therefore, eliminating this disease is essential because millions of children's lives are at risk, and there is a high likelihood of recurrence as long as one child is infected.

Since 1988, cases of wild poliovirus have decreased in more than 125 endemic countries. Unfortunately, Pakistan, alongside Afghanistan, is one of the last two countries where wild polio virus (WPV1) continues to flourish despite the rigorous eradication efforts made by the government. Back in 2021, only 1 case appeared in Pakistan, but now the number has increased rapidly. There's a resurgence seen with 74 cases in 2024 and 6 cases in 2025 until now.

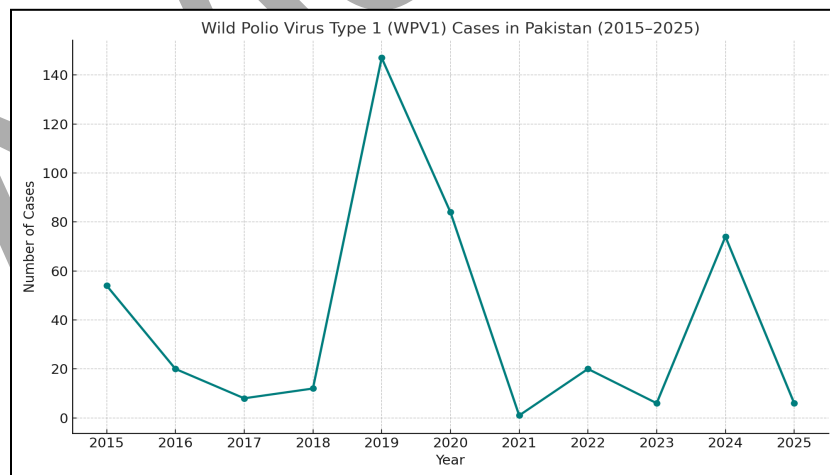
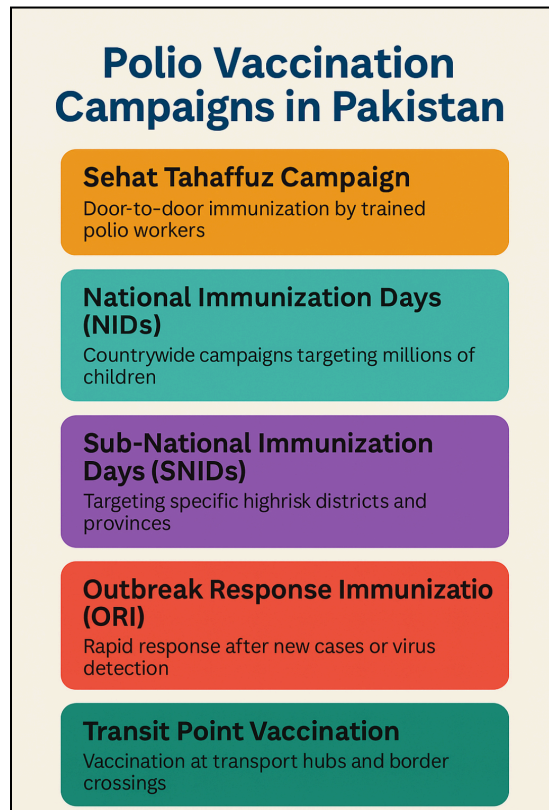


Figure 1: [Polio cases in Pakistan from 2015-2025](#)

## Polio vaccination campaigns in Pakistan



Over the years, Pakistan has conducted numerous polio vaccination campaigns such as **National Immunization Days (NIDs)** in the mid-1990s, **Sub-National Immunization Days (SNIDs)**, **Sehat Muahafiz**, and **Every Child Counts** to provide mass immunization, target high-risk areas, and emphasize accurate tracking, respectively.

In recent years, **Integrated Health Outreach Campaigns** have incorporated polio vaccination with other health services. Supported by **WHO**, **UNICEF**, and local authorities, efforts have been made to raise awareness and close immunity gaps, especially in remote and hesitant communities.

Figure 2: List of Polio Vaccination Campaigns done in Pakistan since the 1900s.

### Current national response

In response to the growing numbers, Pakistan launched its second nationwide polio eradication campaign in 2025, according to the [Global Polio Eradication Initiative](#) report. Through a network of more than 45 million children under five, the campaign seeks to vaccinate. There are 400,000 workers, including 225,000 female vaccinators.

The government has commenced using the 2-4-6 strategic roadmap, which comprises two national, four subnational, and six case response campaigns, to eradicate the virus.

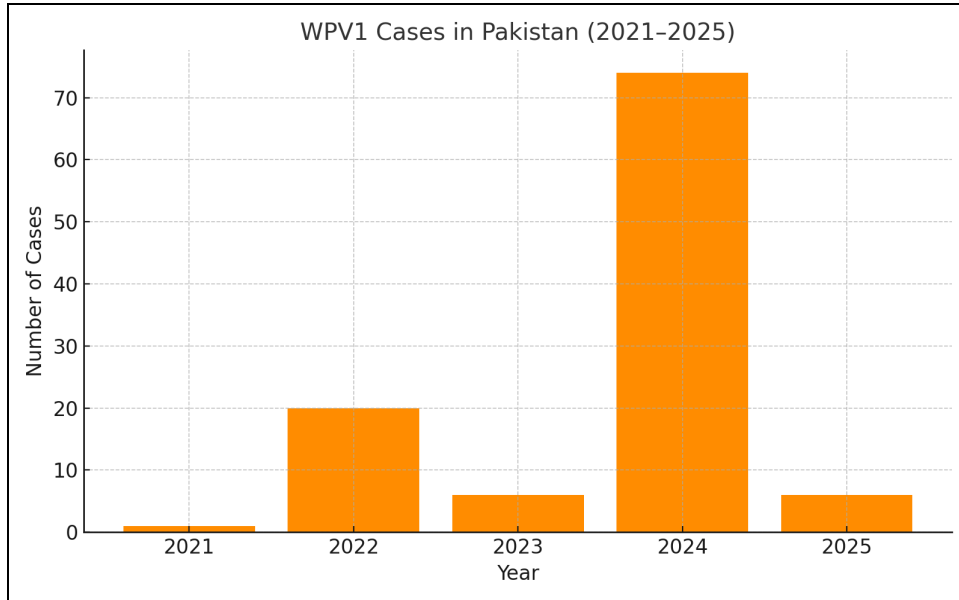


Figure 3: [WPV1 cases in Pakistan from 2021-2025](#)

## Challenges in Polio Eradication

The persistence of polio in Pakistan despite the rigorous campaign is mainly due to the following:

- Parents' refusal to vaccinate their children due to misinformation and often hesitate due to a lack of proper guidance.
- False beliefs about the polio vaccine in underprivileged areas.
- Endangerment of the lives of polio workers due to security threats,
- Difficulty in delivering vaccines to conflict-stricken and faraway areas.

## Conclusion

Although Pakistan has made noteworthy efforts in reducing polio cases, the re-emergence in the past 2 years showcases the need to take a more solid approach. The government needs to address the challenges faced during the polio campaigns and take stricter measures to wipe out this child-killer disease completely.

## References

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