Influenza vaccination coverage rate in Europe during the winter of 2005-2006


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1. Summary

- During the winter 2005/2006 in Europe, influenza vaccination coverage rate in the surveyed population increased (2 points in comparison with 2004/2005 to reach 28%). This increase was particularly due to a significant overall vaccination in two countries: Germany (+6 points) and Italy (+3 points).
- Vaccine uptake in the age recommended elderly (65+) continues to increase (68% vs. 63% in 2004/2005) but there are still efforts to be done at national and international level to increase coverage in this group, to match WHO objectives (75%) in 2010.
- Vaccination intentions rate at 36% of the population (+2 points vs. 2004/2005), much higher than currently achieved vaccination coverage rates. This indicates the willingness of the population to accept more influenza vaccination than in the current situation, and that achieving coverage of 1/3 of the population can be considered a realistic objective in Europe.
- The survey pointed out that the major encouragements to vaccination would be an active recommendation by the family doctor/nurse.

2. Background - Aim

- Our objective was to identify the level of influenza vaccination coverage in five European countries in 2005/2006, to understand the drivers and barriers to vaccination, to find out vaccinations intentions for next winter as well as the major encouraging factor to vaccination.

3. Methodology

- Fielding of surveys with a similar questionnaire. For the UK, Germany, Italy, Spain, a telephone omnibus survey (using CATI system) among 8053 non-institutionalized individuals representative of the population aged 14 years and over was carried out in December 2005 and January 2006. For France, data were based on the yearly survey by GIEU (Groupe d’Etude et Information sur la Grippe), carried out by mail in February 2006, among 4260 non-institutionalized individuals aged 15 and over. The data for France have been weighed to represent 2000 individuals instead of 4260.

4. Results

- In 2006/2007, influenza vaccination coverage rate (VCR) in the population was 26%, increasing with 2 points in comparison with 2005/2006. This increase was due to a higher uptake in both the elderly group (+5%) from 63% to 68% and in the population of 65 years of age (from 15% to 17%).
- Major contributing factors to the overall VCR growth is the higher overall vaccination in Germany and Italy.
- Italy, France and Spain had the lowest vaccine uptake (24%) and Germany the highest (33%). In the elderly, Germany had the lowest uptake (63%), notwithstanding a significant increase, and the UK the highest (79%).
- For winter 2006/2007, 36% of the surveyed population intended to get a flu jab. This means that more than one third of the surveyed population is ready to get vaccinated, indicating that increasing vaccination coverage to such a level is a realistic objective in Europe.

5. References

(3) Szucs T et al. Influenza vaccination coverage rate in France during the winter of 2005/2006. IVW Vienna, October 18-20, 2006 (Abstract/Poster).