

Letter to the Editor



Comment on: Enhancing Pneumococcal Vaccination Rates Through Family Physicians: Addressing Challenges and Raising Awareness

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Cite this article as: Uğraş E, Şimşek E. Comment on: enhancing pneumococcal vaccination rates through family physicians: addressing challenges and raising awareness. *Thorac Res Pract.* [Epub Ahead of Print]

KEYWORDS

Awareness, family physician, vaccination

Received: 17.01.2025

Accepted: 10.03.2025

Epub: 11.06.2025

DEAR EDITOR,

A very informative article was published in the Thoracic Research and Practice in 2024 titled “Effectiveness of a program to raise awareness about pneumococcal vaccination among physicians and patients with chronic respiratory diseases: a multicenter cohort study”.¹ This article highlights that increasing pneumococcal vaccination awareness among physicians and patients with chronic respiratory diseases can raise vaccination rates by up to 75%, thus reducing in-hospital mortality. Family physicians and health workers in Family Health Centers, where most vaccinations are administered, play a key role in this effort.

Pneumococcal vaccination is crucial in family medicine, especially for physicians in primary care. Pneumococcal infections pose a serious risk to those with weakened immune systems, the elderly, and young children, leading to severe diseases like pneumonia, meningitis, and bacteremia. In our country, family physicians administer the conjugated pneumococcal vaccine for free to individuals aged 65 and over. The polysaccharide pneumococcal vaccine is available by prescription to those in at-risk groups, covered by SSI through pharmacies.²

The pneumococcal vaccine is crucial for preventing infections, particularly in high-risk groups (over 65, those with chronic diseases, or weakened immune systems). By administering this vaccine and raising public awareness, family physicians play a key role in boosting community immunity, preventing disease spread, and easing the burden on the healthcare system.³

In recent years, anti-vaccination sentiment has threatened public health and reduced vaccination rates, including for pneumococcal vaccines. Family physicians can combat this by building communication with individuals, explaining the safety and importance of vaccines. Awareness campaigns by family physicians can effectively increase pneumococcal vaccination rates.⁴

Family physicians play a key role in healthcare for individuals aged 65 and over, yet the demand for free pneumococcal vaccines at family health centers remains low. To increase vaccination rates, awareness must be raised, public concerns addressed, and access to services improved. Training for healthcare workers on adult vaccination is essential, and anti-vaccination campaigns should be countered with media support. Public perception that vaccines are only for children must change, and family physicians should have adequate vaccine supplies, with logistical issues minimized. Vaccination information should be provided during healthcare visits, ensuring free access and availability at all health units.

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Footnotes

Authorship Contributions

Surgical and Medical Practices: E.U., E.Ş., Concept: E.U., E.Ş., Design: E.U., E.Ş., Literature Search: E.U., E.Ş., Writing: E.U., E.Ş.

Conflict of Interest: No conflict of interest was declared by the authors.

Financial Disclosure: The authors declared that this study received no financial support.

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