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Influenza Vaccination Knowledge and Attitude of Health Care Workers at a Tertiary Care Hospital, in Turkey

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Objectives: Influenza is a significant public health problem. Annual influenza vaccination has been established the most efficient method for the control of influenza. Even though vaccination is recommended for HCWs (health care worker), vaccination coverage rates are low. This study aimed to evaluate the factors influencing seasonal influenza vaccination uptake among different health care worker groups.

Methods: A cross-sectional survey at a tertiary hospital in Ankara, was applied among HCWs by using a self-administered questionnaire to assess knowledge, attitudes, and uptake of seasonal influenza vaccine. All data were analyzed by using the statistical program SPSS.

Results: A total of 108 HCWs completed the questionnaire, including 16.7% specialist, 21.3% fellowship, 30.6% nursing staff, 12% auxiliary medical staff, 13% administrative staff and 6.5% missing data about profession. The overall vaccination rate for influenza was 60.2%. The highest vaccination rate (83.3%) was observed in the specialist group but no significant difference was observed between vaccinated and non-vaccinated participants according to profession. Vaccinated participants were significantly higher in the group who believed in the necessity for vaccination and have worked for a longer time in the health care profession ($p=0.001$, $p<0.001$, respectively). The belief of necessity for the vaccination were 66.7% in specialist, 65.2% in fellowship, 28.6% in administrative staff, 23.1% in auxiliary staff, 21.2% in nursing staff. None of the respondents who received vaccine last year reported severe flu in the influenza season, but in the non-vaccinated group 10.2% of them had severe flu in the influenza season. Of the 90 participants, 34 (31.4%) reported to have vaccine-associated side effects. The most common reported vaccine-associated side effect was "runny nose, nasal congestion, sore throat, flu or wheezing. The highest proportion of correct responses the respondents gave was for the question on Health Ministry recommendations about influenza vaccination in Turkey (89.8%). The HCWs were least knowledgeable about protection period of influenza vaccine. Reasons for refusing the vaccine programme were provided by 74 participants (68.5%) and doubts about effectiveness was the most common reason for the rejection.

Conclusion: Nearly half of the HCWs did not report receiving an influenza vaccination ever. In our study, the vaccination rates of the HCWs were distinctly low. The Ministry of Health which was the most referenced source, should focus on the issue and develop strategies to further improve vaccine coverage.

Keywords: Attitude, healthcare workers, influenza, knowledge, vaccination