



Does flu vaccination in Italy hit the target?

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Background

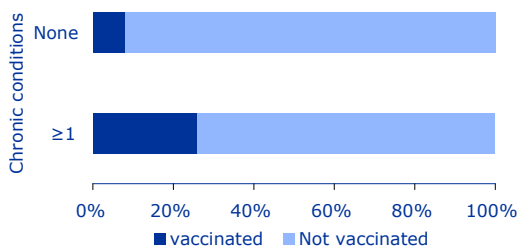
- Vaccination represents a safe and effective way of preventing influenza.
- In Italy, influenza vaccination is recommended for persons ≥ 65 years and those with chronic conditions such as heart disease and diabetes in whom influenza may cause serious complications
- Data on vaccination coverage among the elderly is available, but little is known about coverage in those with chronic conditions

Objectives

- Estimate influenza vaccination coverage among persons 18-64 years of age with chronic conditions

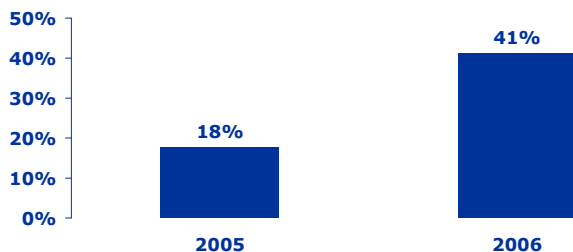
Results 1: Flu vaccination coverage by presence of chronic conditions, 2005 and 2006

- 14% of persons 18-64 years reported ≥ 1 chronic condition
- Overall coverage among those 18-64 years was 10%



A quarter of those with at least one chronic condition had been vaccinated the previous flu season, compared with less than 8% of those with no chronic conditions ($p=0.00008$)

Results 3: Trends in coverage among persons with ≥ 1 chronic condition

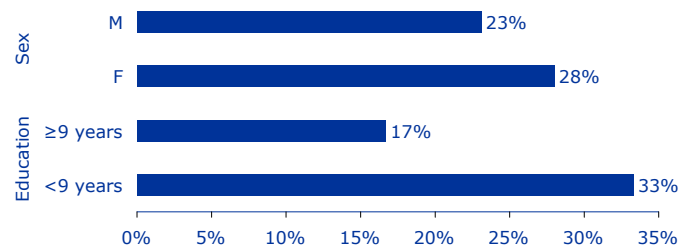


Among those with ≥ 1 condition, coverage increased from 18% in 2005 to 41% in 2006 ($p = 0.07$)

Methods

- Cross-sectional telephone survey conducted in 2005 and 2006, by local health staff to residents 18-69 years chosen randomly from the registers of Local Health Unit 2.
- Each year, 200 respondent (total 400)
- 4% refusals, 13% replacements
- Information collected included vaccination during the previous flu season and the presence of chronic conditions for which vaccination is recommended
- Analysis was limited to the 367 persons < 65 years
- To examine risk factors, 2005 and 2006 data were pooled

Results 2: Factors associated with vaccination among those with ≥ 1 chronic condition



No significant differences were observed between men and women, nor between those with < 9 or ≥ 9 years of education

Limitations

- Self-reporting may lead to over- or under-estimates of chronic conditions
- Telescoping bias may influence accurate reporting of vaccination during the previous flu season

Conclusions

- Coverage was higher in the at-risk population, but the majority of those at risk for serious complications of influenza had not been vaccinated
- Efforts are continuing to increase awareness of patients at risk and their physicians of the importance of vaccination

