Abstract

Title: "Acceptance of mandatory vaccination policy for seasonal influenza vaccine among healthcare workers at a tertiary care hospital in Saudi Arabia".

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Background: Influenza vaccination of health care workers (HCWs) is essential for patient safety and their own safety. Nosocomial influenza outbreak can result in staff absences, disrupt health services and increase healthcare costs.

Due to lower rates of the vaccine uptake among (HCWs) despite efforts to reach good vaccination coverage and considering the high vulnerability of pilgrim patients using healthcare facilities in Hajj seasons, Ministry of Health in Saudi Arabia, recently adopted mandatory vaccination policy for HCWs in all healthcare facilities in Makkah and Madinah to reach an acceptable level of vaccination.

This paper aims to assess acceptance of mandatory influenza vaccination policy among HCWs and factors independently affecting their acceptance or non-acceptance.

Methodology: A cross sectional survey was carried out during October 1-16, 2015, among HCWs in King Abdullah medical city in Makkah, Saudi Arabia. A self-administered, anonymous questionnaire was distributed to assess the uptake of influenza vaccine and to examine potential predictors of acceptance and non-acceptance of mandatory influenza vaccination policy among HCWs.

Results: Out of 500 HCWs approached, 447 returned valid self-reported questionnaires with response rate 89.4%. Overall, 88.3% of the participants reported receiving vaccination during 2014-2015 season, higher than 2013/2014 season (61.2%) and 54.5% for 2012/2013 season before adopting mandatory vaccination for HCWs.

Better knowledge of HCWs about influenza disease and influenza vaccine (OR: 4.03; 95%CI 1.87-8.68; p<0.001), and agreement of the healthcare worker's to recommend the vaccine to the target groups (OR:5.55; 95%CI 2.56-12.03; p<0.001), were independently predicting acceptance of HCWs' to mandatory influenza vaccination. On the other hand, concern about the vaccine efficacy (OR:0.29; 95%CI 0.10-0.86; p=0.025) and older age (OR:0.95; 95%CI 0.91-0.99; p=0.016), were independently predicting the non-acceptance attitude.

Conclusion: our study revealed high acceptance of mandatory influenza vaccination policy among HCWs. Awareness programs are essential to clarify evidence-based facts and correct misconceptions about the vaccine.

Non-accepting staff of the mandatory policy were less knowledgeable and more likely of not recommending the vaccine to the target groups with its worse consequences.

Based on large effect size, high acceptance and minimal contradiction, we recommend the extension of mandatory vaccination policy to other health facilities.

Key words: Influenza vaccine; mandatory vaccination; Acceptance; Healthcare workers (HCWs); Saudi Arabia.