

Publication

A cross-sectional survey to evaluate knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) regarding seasonal influenza vaccination among European travellers to resource-limited destinations

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BACKGROUND: Influenza is one of the most common vaccine-preventable diseases in travellers. By performing two cross-sectional questionnaire surveys during winter 2009 and winter 2010 among European travellers to resource-limited destinations, we aimed to investigate knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) regarding seasonal influenza vaccination. **METHODS:** Questionnaires were distributed in the waiting room to the visitors of the University of Zurich Centre for Travel Health (CTH) in January and February 2009 and January 2010 prior to travel health counselling (CTH09 and CTH10). Questions included demographic data, travel-related characteristics and KAP regarding influenza vaccination. Data were analysed by using SPSS version 14.0 for Windows. Differences in proportions were compared using the Chi-square test and the significance level was set at $p < 0.05$. **RESULTS:** 64 yrs (25, 21%) and recommendations of the family physician (27, 22.7%) were the most often reported reasons for being vaccinated. In the multiple logistic regression analyses of the pooled data increasing age (OR = 1.03, 95% CI 1.01 - 1.04), a business trip (OR = 0.39, 95% CI 0.17 - 0.92) and seasonal influenza vaccination in the previous winter seasons (OR = 12.91, 95% CI 8.09 - 20.58) were independent predictors for seasonal influenza vaccination in 2009 or 2010. Influenza vaccination recommended by the family doctor (327, 37.7%), travel to regions with known high risk of influenza (305, 35.1%), and influenza vaccination required for job purposes (233, 26.8%) were most frequently mentioned to consider influenza vaccination. **CONCLUSIONS:** Risk perception and vaccination coverage concerning seasonal and pandemic influenza was very poor among travellers to resource-limited destinations when compared to traditional at-risk groups. Previous access to influenza vaccination substantially facilitated vaccinations in the subsequent year. Information strategies about influenza should be intensified and include health professionals, e.g. family physicians, travel medicine practitioners and business enterprises.

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