



## Service Priorities and Programmes Electronic Presentations

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### **Why do the primary health care workers choose to get the seasonal influenza vaccine, and why not? – A pilot survey in a general out-patient clinic**

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#### **Introduction**

WHO recommends annual seasonal influenza vaccination for health care workers (HCW). A high vaccination rate for HCW can protect the staff as well as greatly reduce cross infection in health care settings. However, vaccination coverage among HCW is extremely variable worldwide. In most studies, fewer than 60% of HCW were vaccinated against seasonal influenza in various clinical settings. In Hong Kong, free vaccination had been provided to all HCW in the public service annually since 2003. A local study found that seasonal influenza vaccination of nurses in Hong Kong fell from 57% in 2005 to 24% in 2012.

#### **Objectives**

To investigate the stated acceptability of seasonal influenza vaccination among the HCW in a general-out patient clinic (GOPC) To explore the main reasons of their acceptance or refusal of seasonal influenza vaccination

#### **Methodology**

Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Programme for HA staff 2013/14 started from 18th October 2013. Anonymous questionnaires in Chinese language were delivered to all HCW working regularly in Cheung Sha Wan JC GOPC in November 2013. The respondents were asked whether they had already received or intended to receive the flu vaccine, and their main reasons of accepting or refusing the shot this year.

#### **Result**

30 questionnaires were completed and returned from 9 doctors, 6 nurses, 2 pharmacy staff, 4 clinical assistants, 4 shroff staff and 5 workmen. The response rate was 90.9%. Less than half (14, 46.7%) of the respondents had received or intended to receive the vaccine, which included 3 clinical assistants (75%), 6 doctors (66.7%), 2 shroff staff (50%), 2 nurses (33.3%), 1 workman (20%) and no pharmacy colleague (0%). The single most important reason for them to choose the shot was “self-protection” (9 out

of 14, 64.3%), while the second main reason was “to protect others (patients, family members, colleagues)”. 6 out of the 16 respondents (37.5%) claimed their main reason of refusal was “uncertainty about the efficacy of vaccine in protecting myself”. Four colleagues (25%) refused to vaccinate since they were “fear of injection”, and another 4 (25%) declined due to “concern about the systemic side effects of seasonal flu vaccine”. One respondent chose not to shot because of “concern about the local side effect at injection site”. Though the sample size of this pilot survey was far too small to represent the whole primary healthcare setting, the relatively low acceptance rate of 46.7% as demonstrated was consistent with figures from many larger scale studies. This suggested the potential low coverage rate of seasonal flu vaccination among our frontline HCW, which should be maintained at a higher level to enhance pandemic preparedness. Future vaccination campaign should incorporate more strategies to encourage the uptake of vaccines by HCW. The major barriers of accepting the shot should be identified and targeted strategies should be implemented to increase the uptake rate.