Addressing inequalities in children’s flu immunisation uptake

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Challenging Variation in Children’s Healthcare
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Annual Flu Vaccination for Children

• Vital component of the Annual Flu Vaccination Programme
  • If we get it right potential to reduce morbidity and mortality in general population to greater extent than the rest of the programme put together
• Routine part of the National Childhood Immunisation Programme
• It’s here to stay
• **NOT** - ‘temporary’, ‘nice to do’ or ‘ an add-on’
• Gradual roll-out
  • This coming season – Age 2 to ‘rising’ 8 year olds (Year 3)
2015-16 Uptake – children’s cohorts

- 2 year olds – 35.4%
  - (by CCG 16.5 – 69.0%)

- 3 year olds – 37.7%
  - (by CCG 15.3 – 55.5%)

- 4 year olds – 30.1%
  - (by CCG 12.6 – 51.4%)

- 53.6% school year 1 age (provisional)

- 52.1% school year 2 age (provisional)
Inequalities

- By age
  - Decreases with age
- By geography
  - Urban > rural
- By religious group
- By model of delivery
  - Higher school based
- By provider
- By ethnic group
- By level of deprivation
  - Lower in most deprived groups

- Commissioning priority to reduce inequalities
- Not unique to this immunisation programme
- Some of these things can be changed
  - others not
  - others require local adaptation of services to suit the population needs
Other challenges - Public/Patient Attitudes

- Protects me/my child and my family
- Social responsibility
- No injection (LAIV)
- Vaccination side effects aren't as bad as getting flu
- I trust my doctor or nurse to advise me
- Safe vaccine, used in US for years
- New programme – I’ll wait to see if it’s safe/works.

- Flu is only serious for vulnerable people
  - Why give it to ‘healthy’ children/people?
- We never get flu
- We eat well and are naturally immune
- Vaccine gives you flu
- I heard the vaccine doesn’t work
- I am/my child is allergic
- I’m too busy to make an appointment
- It contains porcine gelatine, so can’t have it
Programme Challenges

- Vaccine is a biological product
  - Vulnerable to delays in production
  - Vulnerable to mismatch with circulating viral strains
- LAIV Short ‘shelf life’ vaccine
- LAIV only one supplier
- LAIV contain porcine gelatine
- Short time to do 100,000s of children
  - October to end December
- Providers have competing priorities
- Flu vaccine’s poor reputation
Reducing inequalities – increasing uptake

- Personal invitation
  - Clinician endorsement
- Information
  - Replace myths with facts
  - Don’t overload (3-5 pts)
- Social norming/copying
- Increase access to child friendly services
  - Tailor services to population needs
- Emphasise part of national immunisation programme
- Provider preparation, preparation, preparation
  - Outcome is dependent upon it and pre-destined!
General Practice Delivery

- Improving uptake for 2-4 year olds
- Increasing influenza immunisation in General Practice
- The highest performing practices:
  - Have **tenacious** Single Lead Member of Staff for the campaign
  - Set aspirational **targets** practice and don’t stop until reached
  - Create additional prompts and re-run searches in IT systems to **identify eligible** patients
  - All immunisers include GPs **opportunistically** immunise
  - Use Phone calls as first-line for **personal** invitation
  - Collaborate with other **stakeholders:**
    - Midwives, Health Visitors, Nursery staff
  - Write up the campaign and **review** the following year’s campaign

Dexter LJ et al. (2012). Strategies to increase influenza vaccination rates: outcomes of a nationwide cross-sectional survey of UK general practice. BMJ Open [http://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/2/3/e000851.full.pdf+html](http://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/2/3/e000851.full.pdf+html)


www.england.nhs.uk
Is it working?
Flu vaccine pilot success

In flu vaccine pilot areas (2014/15) where primary school age children were given the nasal spray vaccine we saw:

- **94%** decrease in GP influenza like illness consultation rates
- **74%** decrease in A&E respiratory attendances
- **93%** decrease in hospital admissions due to confirmed influenza
- **59%** decrease in adults: GP influenza like illness consultation rates

Uptake and impact of vaccinating school age children against influenza during a season with circulation of drifted influenza A and B strains, England, 2014/15
to be a grown up
about flu
visit the
nhs website
Questions