

PS1.296

Influenza vaccination coverage among elderly people - a quality study

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Background & Aim: Seasonal Influenza vaccination is the primary method for preventing the influenza virus and its complications. The vaccine is strongly recommended for risk groups such as the elderly. The National Health Services are the predominant payment mechanism for the provision and administration of the vaccine. The World Health Assembly adopted a resolution to increase influenza vaccination coverage of all people at high risk and to attain coverage of 75% among the elderly by 2010. This aspiration was reaffirmed by the European Council. However, vaccination coverage for this group is low in many countries. In Portugal the National Health Directorate recommends the target of 60% vaccination coverage. The aim of this study is to evaluate and improve the quality of influenza vaccine coverage in people of 65 years or older from two primary health care facilities in the Central Region of Portugal.

Method: Qualitative study. Cross-sectional research evaluation of influenza vaccination from the season 2014/2015 in people of 65 years or older, from two Portuguese primary healthcare facilities. Type of intervention: educative. Another evaluation was undertaken in the season 2015/2016. The data collection was retrospective from Medicine One®, MIM@UF®, SINUS® programs and it was analysed using Microsoft Excel® 2010.

Results: In the season 2014/2015 the total number of people 65 years or older vaccinated against influenza was 2781 out of a total of 8275 people, which corresponds to influenza vaccine coverage of 34.5%. In the season 2015/2016, 3080 people 65 years or older were vaccinated and the influenza vaccine coverage was 36.9%.

Conclusions: The data obtained from the second evaluation shows that vaccine coverage was below the values recommended by the European Council and the Portuguese National Health Directorate. This suggests healthcare professionals should implement new and more effective strategies to educate the elderly

