

Barriers and Motivators for Adult Vaccination in New York City

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Introduction

- Current adult vaccination rates in New York City (NYC) are low
- The NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) conducts a Community Health Survey (CHS) annually. CHS provides robust data on the health of New Yorkers, including estimates of vaccination coverage
- Only 44% of adults ≥ 18 years received influenza vaccine according to 2015 CHS data, far below the Healthy People 2020 goal of 70%
- Only 50% of adults ≥ 65 years received pneumococcal vaccination according to 2012 CHS data, far lower than the Healthy People 2020 goal of 90%
- The NYC DOHMH Bureau of Immunization (BOI) promotes the Standards for Adult Immunization Practice through development of provider and patient education resources
- To develop these communications, BOI gained insights about the behaviors and attitudes toward vaccinations among providers and NYC public

Objectives

BOI conducted qualitative research to achieve the following objectives:

1. Examine behaviors and attitudes toward vaccinations among NYC adults and providers
2. Assess the extent to which providers make recommendations about vaccinations and understand how to encourage stronger recommendations
3. Investigate practice-level barriers to implementing the Standards for Adult Immunization Practice
4. Understand barriers and motivators to getting vaccinations for NYC adults
5. Inform the development of adult immunization toolkit for providers

Methods

- BOI conducted 11 focus groups among NYC adult providers (n=7) and adult patients (n=4) in February 2016
- The focus groups lasted approximately 90 minutes each
- Qualitative analysis of the focus groups was conducted, including examination of the verbal and written exercises

Providers

- Focus groups had 6 participants each, stratified by:
 1. Primary care physicians (3 groups)
 2. Mid-level providers (3 groups): nurses, midwives and physician assistants
 3. Specialty physicians (1 group): cardiologists, oncologists, hematologists and obstetrician/gynecologists
- Provider groups included a mix of providers/practice type, gender, NYC boroughs and race/ethnicity

Patients

- Focus groups had 8 participants each, stratified by:
 1. General population
 2. African-American/Caribbean
 3. Asians
 4. Spanish-speaking Latinos
- Groups of patients contained a mix of education, household income (including minimum of 50% under \$50,000 per year), gender, age and NYC borough
- Each patient group included 3 participants on Medicaid
- The Spanish-speaking group contained respondents who spoke Spanish at least more than half the time in their household and a mix of foreign-born status

Results

Patients and Providers

- Vaccines are important but not a top concern for providers and patients
 - Providers, especially specialists, focus primarily on treating illnesses
 - Patients tend to associate vaccinations with children
- Patients and providers believe that preventive health is important and that vaccinations are a critical component of preventive health
 - The idea that vaccinations prevent serious diseases is easily understood and accepted

Providers

- Most providers strongly support vaccinations
- Most providers understand discussion with patients is necessary for an effective recommendation and are willing to do this

Barriers

- Time is a significant barrier to vaccinating patients
 - Providers often lack time to address patients' questions and concerns and prioritize acute health issues over vaccination
- Providers often do not actively recommend vaccines due to cost concerns
 - Providers say the return on investment for vaccinations is low
 - Insurance coverage issues are a common challenge for providers

Motivators

- Providers believe that outside education from trusted sources would help facilitate vaccination discussions with their patients and save time

Patients

- Patients want to play an active role in their healthcare decisions
 - Patient satisfaction is becoming increasingly important and influences how providers make recommendations to their patients
 - Provider recommendations are important for patients, but they also expect a discussion
- Patients want to verify their provider's advice with outside information
 - While provider recommendations are critical for patients, they often consult additional sources of information
 - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and NYC DOHMH are trusted information sources for patients

Barriers

- Patients are not aware of or are misinformed on recommended vaccines
 - Patients are concerned about adverse side effects from vaccines
- Patients wary of vaccines are likely to put it off and never return

Motivators

- Accurate, simple information on vaccinations helps motivate patients
- Understanding the risks and benefits of vaccinations is an important motivator for patients to get recommended vaccines
 - Health values messaging, like protecting one's self and family from disease, helps to motivate patients

Conclusions

- Patients can be motivated to seek out the vaccines they need
- Protection for one's self and family is a key motivator for patients
- Patient materials with accurate, simple information on recommended vaccines can both educate patients and facilitate discussion with providers
- Encouraging patients to get vaccinated that same day is important
- Providers should adopt best practices to effectively recommend and bill for needed vaccines

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