

## SHORT COMMUNICATION

## Adherence to the flu vaccination campaign by healthcare professionals in a teaching hospital

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After three years of sustained circulation of H1N1 subtype (pandemic A/H1N1), when the biggest pandemic of this century caused many deaths, we realized that the conducts have been improved with the availability of specific vaccines and antiviral drugs that allowed the decrease in morbidity and mortality. These measures lessened the panic, but many questions on forms of contagion and treatment indication persist, including the disregard of severity. The institution of risk groups for the development of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) permitted therapeutic and preventive alternatives. Healthcare professionals (HCP) were included as an at-risk population for the disease.

With the establishment of this disease as endemic, during the winter months, the population needed to adopt/reinforce prevention and control measures, such as hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, avoiding crowded places and respiratory precautions for suspected cases. Increased attendance and overcrowding of health services has generated insecurity for EDs, as well as administrative and socioeconomic problems in a global context. Regardless of all the indicators and evidence, the population has not acquired or maintained preventive habits. A systematization of suspected flu syndrome (FS) and SARS, especially in urgency/emergency care units, has become necessary to minimize the occupational risk and therefore, absenteeism. The use of screening protocols aids in the protection and optimization of personal protective equipment (PPE) against respiratory disease transmission.

The systematization of vaccination campaigns is disseminated and encouraged by the Specialized Safety Engineering and Occupational Medicine Service (SESMT) of Hospital Santa Cruz (Santa Cruz do Sul,

RS, Brazil). It is a regional teaching hospital with 194 beds, of high complexity, with 798 employees, located in the region of Rio Pardo and Taquari Valleys. The aim of this study was to evaluate the institutional campaign against flu in this community hospital.

During the National Flu Vaccination Campaign, 659 doses were applied at SESMT-HSC. The national target for immunization of risk groups is 80.0%. In our institution 457 (57.3%) employees were vaccinated, of which 221 (47.5%) worked in assistential care and 236 (70.87%) in administrative functions.

It has not been analyzed to date, whether the employees who did not adhere to the vaccination campaign received the vaccine elsewhere, which may be a relevant limiting factor for the study. The results show low adherence by the assistential care team and this fact worries hospital administration. We identified reports discrediting the vaccination effect as well as fear of adverse events. Based on that, we established the following questions: Why did the healthcare professionals refuse the vaccination? What is the impact of this attitude when managing their patients?

In this context one needs to consider cultural issues, beliefs, values and the continuing education process in professional training. Changes in behavior are a slow and gradual process and interfere with the acceptance of evidence-based preventive and safety technical standards, which will culminate in a change of habit. This study showed a gap in the development of educational activities with healthcare teams in order to make them aware about the importance of immunization and prevention of occupational diseases.

## REFERENCES

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