

vol. n.
60/3

Cited in Index Medicus / Medline
NLM ID 921440 (Pub-Med)

September
2019

Supplemento 1

Atti del 52° Congresso Nazionale
Società Italiana di Igiene, Medicina Preventiva e Sanità Pubblica (SIIP)
Perugia 16-19 ottobre 2019

JOURNAL OF PREVENTIVE MEDICINE AND HYGIENE



The Journal has been accredited,
on occasion of the 17th December
2004 Meeting of the Executive and
Scientific SIIP Councils, by the Italian
Society of Hygiene, Preventive Medicine
and Public Health

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methods, on which extensive literature is already present, to increase the uptake of vaccination. In this review we collected all available evidence on this tool, in order to prioritize future actions.

METHODS

We conducted a systematic review following the PRISMA guidelines to analyze the available evidence from peer-reviewed studies on the effect of email-based interventions applied to immunization programs. We included any measure of vaccine uptake or immunization coverage, in any target population and settings.

RESULTS

We included 11 studies in the final analysis, of which 9 were RCTs, 1 was a controlled trial and 1 a before and after study. Most studies were conducted in the US (81.9%). Six studies had data on the uptake of influenza vaccination, three on HPV series completion, 1 on PPSV23, and 1 on vaccines recommended for adolescents.

In 4 studies email reminders proved to be more effective in increasing vaccination uptake than no reminders. In other four studies, email reminders were compared to reminders delivered via traditional methods (phone call, mail, paper card) and they all failed to prove the superiority of email reminders. On the other hand, four studies compared the effectiveness of email reminders with reminders delivered via other communication technologies, also failing to prove their superiority.

In one study a significantly higher increase in uptake was achieved when combining emails with Interactive Voice Response phone calls. Finally, we included four studies that analyzed the content of the email.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this review outlined that not enough evidence is available regarding the use of email reminders to increase vaccination uptake. Our findings suggest that the choice of reminder method should depend on the population and future studies should analyze its cost-effectiveness and convenience in respect to other methods, and aim at improving the content of emails to increase their efficacy as a reminder method.

Italian survey on public health professionals' attitudes and beliefs towards mandatory vaccination: a pilot study

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INTRODUCTION

In response to the low rate of vaccination coverage and the concerns around vaccine hesitancy and refusal, in 2017 Italy intro-

duced ten mandatory vaccinations for preschool and school-age children. The debate over mandatory vaccination is still on and involves citizens as well as politicians and health professionals. Within this context, we designed a survey to assess Italian public health professionals' attitudes and beliefs towards mandatory vaccination.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The survey was piloted on a sample of 73 public health professionals belonging to the Italian Society of Hygiene (SIItI). The on-line questionnaire consists of five sections: socio-demographic information; political and health system attitudes; personal and professional experience with vaccinations; attitudes and beliefs towards mandatory vaccination; perception of the epidemiologic, social and economic impact of mandatory vaccination.

RESULTS

Fifty-two people completed the questionnaire, a response rate of 71%. They are mostly medical doctors (86 %) working in Universities (56%) or Prevention departments (21%) and directly involved in vaccinations (71%). The vast majority of respondents is in favor of the Italian mandatory vaccine Law (85%) and 65% believes that it should not be removed. Moreover, 83% of respondents is against the recent Government's proposal of introducing a "flexible" obligation. Among the alternative strategies to mandatory vaccinations, the favorite are vaccination promotion and information campaigns for the general population and organizational interventions to strengthen vaccination services. Nevertheless, 67% of respondents consider their implementation to be very difficult. Concerning the epidemiologic impact of mandatory vaccination, the majority of respondents agree that mandatory vaccination is able to increase vaccination coverage and reduce morbidity from vaccine-preventable infectious diseases. Concerning the social impact, the majority of respondents believes that mandatory vaccination encourages hesitant parents to vaccinate their children but exacerbate the quarrel with no vax movements. Finally, regarding the economic impact, the majority of respondents agree that mandatory vaccination will overall save health and social costs for the National Health System.

CONCLUSIONS

The pilot study showed positive attitudes and beliefs towards mandatory vaccination among Italian public health professionals. Moreover, it confirmed the usability of the questionnaire and provided important input for the main survey, which will be soon circulated to all the members of the SIItI.