

Respiratory infections

Selective and poor knowledge of Polish medical personnel about influenza as a cause of low vaccination coverage rate against seasonal influenza

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Influenza is the important infectious disease in terms of hospitalization and mortality rates.

The aim was to study the knowledge of Polish medical staff about influenza and influenza immunizations.

Material and methods: 495 respondents (70% women, 83% doctors, primary care physicians mainly, 4% nurses, 4% medical students) were examined with on-line questionnaire consisting of 18 multiple choice questions.

Results. The mean score was 4.8/18 (26,9%) of correct answers. The respondents knew contraindications to vaccination and antiviral treatment well, but the minority knew indications to vaccination listed in National Immunization Program for 2014. Only 8.9% of respondents knew all methods of influenza virus transmission, 10.3% knew typical complications in pregnant women, 11.3% correct vaccine dosage in children and 12.1% proper diagnostic approach to influenza. Only 9.7% of examined medical professionals knew the poor prognostic factors of severe influenza.

Conclusion: our study revealed the main reasons for the low vaccination coverage rate against influenza in Poland - generally poor knowledge about the influenza and its complications together with an excellent knowledge of contraindications to vaccinations and excessive fear of vaccination. This strongly suggests that medical professionals should continue with on going education courses particularly focusing on the influenza complications across different risk groups, and poor prognostic factors of severe influenza.