




BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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Difference in influenza vaccination coverage between at-risk adult immigrants and Italian citizens

Authors: *Fabiani, Massimo* (Italy); *Di Napoli, Anteo* (Italy); *Declich, Silvia* (Italy); *Gargiulo, Lidia* (Italy); *Riccardo, Flavia* (Italy); *Petrelli, Alessio* (Italy)

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Background: Due to their increased vulnerability, immigrants are considered a priority group for communicable disease prevention and control in Europe. This study aims to estimate the influenza vaccination coverage (IVC) among regular immigrants and evaluate factors leading to different rates compared to Italian citizens (IC).

Methods: Based on data collected by the National Institute for Statistics during a population-based cross-sectional survey conducted in Italy in 2012-2013, we analysed information on 42,048 adult residents (≥ 18 years) at risk for influenza complications and with free access to vaccination (elderly ≥ 65 years and/or people with specific chronic diseases). We compared IVC between 885 regular immigrants and 41,163 IC using log-binomial models while controlling for potential confounders.

Results: IVC among immigrants was 16.9% compared to 40.2% among IC (vaccination coverage ratio (VCR)=0.42, 95% confidence interval (CI): 0.36-0.49). Adjusting for gender, age and area of residence, this difference was greatly reduced but remained statistically significant (VCR=0.71, 95 CI: 0.61-0.81). Further adjustment for socio-economic factors (education, occupation, family composition and economic status) and a composite indicator of health-services utilization (e.g., hospital admissions and outpatients visits) did not significantly affect the difference (VCR=0.78, 95% CI: 0.68-0.90). However, only recent immigrants showed a significantly different IVC compared to IC (≤ 12 years in Italy: VCR=0.68, 95% CI: 0.56-0.83; > 12 years in Italy: VCR=0.92, 95% CI: 0.76-1.10).

Conclusions: The results adjusted for demographic and socio-economic profile and for health-services utilization show a reduction by 32% of IVC in recent immigrants compared to IC. This suggests that other factors, such as cultural and linguistic barriers, could affect IVC among recent immigrants and need to be investigated to adequately plan effective strategies to improve IVC in this vulnerable group.

Message: Differences in demographic and socio-economic profile and health-services utilization do not fully explain the reduced influenza vaccination rate in recent immigrants compared to Italian citizens. Investigations are needed to identify other factors affecting influenza vaccination uptake in recent immigrants and adequately plan effective strategies to increase it in this vulnerable group.