

KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES OF SERBIAN MEDICAL STUDENTS REGARDING INFLUENZA VACCINATION

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Abstract. Influenza is a major cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide, but is vaccine preventable. It is important to know the knowledge, attitudes and practices of medical students regarding influenza vaccination since these may influence their practice of medicine in the future. Therefore, in this study we aimed to determine the knowledge, attitudes and practices of Serbian medical students at the Faculty of Medicine, Belgrade, Serbia in order to inform the education curriculum at the study institution. This study was conducted during 5-23 December 2011. Study subjects were all fourth year medical students who were willing to participate in the study. Each student was asked to complete a self-administered anonymous questionnaire asking about their knowledge, attitudes and practices regarding influenza vaccination. A total of 413 subjects were included in the study (response rate of 83.6%). The mean [\pm standard deviation (SD)] age of study subjects was 22.7 (\pm 1.6) years; 63.9% females. Fourteen percent of subjects had previously received a vaccine to prevent against seasonal influenza and 4.8% had previously received a vaccine to prevent against pandemic influenza. Self-protection was the most commonly given reason for receiving influenza vaccination. Lack of time, forgetting to get the vaccine, not realizing their risk and belief the vaccine was ineffective were the main reasons for not receiving influenza vaccination. On multivariate regression analysis, belief that all medical students should be vaccinated against influenza [Odds Ratio (OR) = 2.93; 95% Confidence Interval (CI): 1.36 - 6.30] and receipt of pandemic influenza vaccine (OR = 16.74; 95%CI: 5.59 - 50.11) were factors significantly independently associated with receiving the seasonal influenza vaccine while receipt of annual seasonal influenza vaccination was significantly independently associated with receiving the pandemic influenza vaccination. To summarize, the percentage of subjects who had received influenza vaccination was low. In conclusion, subjects at the study institution need to be educated about their risk for contracting influenza and the efficacy of the vaccine. Receipt of the vaccine should be made more convenient so as not to take a long time to receive it and a vaccine should include coverage of both the pandemic strain and the seasonal strains in order to improve study subject uptake.

Keywords: influenza, vaccination, KAP, medical student

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