

Influenza Vaccination Acceptance and Refusal Reasons among Tunisian Elderly

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Abstract : Influenza vaccination (IV) is recommended for elderly persons, especially those with underlying conditions. In countries where IV rates in the elderly remain unsatisfactory, exploring attitudes of older persons toward the flu vaccine could be useful to identify barriers and facilitators to IV. The aim of this study was to determine the reasons for IV acceptance or decline in the Tunisian elderly. A national cross-sectional study was conducted in 2019, among persons aged 60 years and over with chronic disease. Data were collected using a standard administered questionnaire. Of the 1191 older persons included, 19.4% received the influenza vaccine in the 2018-2019 flu season. The two main reasons that may lead to refusal of vaccination were concerns that the vaccine could cause side effects (71.5%) and a belief that the vaccine was ineffective (33.9%). The main reason that may lead to accepting vaccination was a doctor's recommendation (41.1%). Doctors were by far the most trusted source for information regarding influenza vaccine (91.5%) followed by pharmacists (17.6%). Our results highlighted the important role that doctors could play in promoting IV among the Tunisian elderly. Physicians should correct misconceptions about adverse events and the efficiency of the vaccine. In fact, influenza vaccines are generally effective and safe among older persons.

Keywords : attitudes, influenza vaccination, older persons, Tunisia

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