

## Low Pertussis Vaccine Coverage Rates among Polish Nurses

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**Abstract :** Background. Since 2014 the pertussis vaccine is recommended to Polish health care workers who have close contacts with infants. Although this recommendation is implemented into the National Immunization Programme, its realization has remained unknown. The Purpose: The aim of the study, conducted at the department of Social Medicine and Public Health (Medical University of Warsaw, Poland), was to describe a perception, knowledge and coverage rates regarding pertussis vaccination among nursing staff. According to the authors' knowledge, it was the first study related to this topic in our country. Material and Methods: A total number of 543 nurses who work at pediatric or neonatal wards was included into the study (501 women and 42 men), average age was 47 years. All nurses were asked to fulfill the anonymous survey, previously validated. Results: 1. Coverage rates: The analysis of results revealed that only 4% of responders reported they were vaccinated with Tdpa within past 10 years, while 8% declared they would plan the vaccine in the future. 35% of responders would consider the Tdpa vaccine whether there is some kind of the reimbursement. 2. Perception and knowledge of the disease and vaccination: The majority (82%) of nurses did not recognize pertussis as a re-emerging infectious disease. 54% of them believed that obligatory vaccinations in the childhood protect against the disease and the protection is a life-long one. Only 15% of nurses considered pertussis as a possible nosocomial infection. The current epidemiology of the disease was known to 6% of responders, while 24% of them were familiar with pertussis vaccination schedules for infants, children and adolescents, but only 9% of responders knew that adults older than 19 years are recommended to be vaccinated with Tdpa every 10 years. Many nurses (82%) would expect more educational activities related to pertussis and methods of its prophylaxis. Conclusions: The pertussis vaccine coverage rate among Polish nurses is extremely low. This is a result of not enough knowledge about the disease and its prevention. Educational activities addressed to health care workers and reimbursement of the pertussis vaccine are required to improve awareness and increase of vaccine coverage rates in the future.

**Keywords :** coverage, nurse, pertussis, vaccine

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