Objective 1: increase in seasonal vaccine use

Managing the Human Toll Caused by Seasonal Influenza: New York State's Mandate to Vaccinate or Mask
6 Nov 2013 | JAMA Vol. 310, No. 17 | Arthur Caplan, PhD1; Nirav R. Shah, MD, MPH2
New York State and the nation as a whole experienced one of the worst influenza seasons in a decade during the winter of 2012-2013. The flu is especially threatening in health care settings such as hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, and nursing homes, where exposure to flu virus is heightened by ill patients and close and ongoing contact with infected health care professionals and staff. Public health officials have long urged health care personnel to get vaccinated.

Trends in influenza vaccination behaviours – results from the CoPanFlu cohort, France, 2006 to 2011
4 Nov 2013 | Eurosurveillance
Controversies over the effectiveness and safety of the pandemic influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 vaccine in 2009/10 may have altered the influenza vaccination coverage in France after the pandemic season. The purpose of this study was to determine whether the pandemic affected seasonal influenza vaccination behaviours in the general population by analysing vaccination behaviours from 2006/07 to 2011/12 among the 1,451 subjects of the Cohort for Pandemic Influenza (CoPanFlu) France. The study found that vaccination behaviours in 2010/11 and 2011/12 significantly differed from behaviours before the pandemic, with the notable exception of the targeted risk groups for seasonal influenza-related complications. Among the population with no risk factors, the post-pandemic influenza vaccine coverage decreased, with people aged 15 to 24 years and 45 to 64 years being most likely to abandon vaccination. Therefore, this study documents a moderate negative effect of the 2009/10 pandemic episode on vaccination behaviours in the French metropolitan population that was apparent also in the following two seasons. Moreover, it does not exclude that the general trend of reduced vaccination has also affected certain targeted groups at high risk for complications.

Ethics of mandatory vaccination for healthcare workers
4 Nov 2013 | Eurosurveillance
Healthcare workers (HCWs) are at increased risk of contracting infections at work and further transmitting them to colleagues and patients. Immune HCWs would be protected themselves and act as a barrier against the spread of infections and maintain healthcare delivery during outbreaks, but vaccine uptake rates in HCWs have often been low. In order to achieve adequate immunisation rates in HCWs, mandatory vaccination policies are occasionally implemented by healthcare authorities, but such policies have raised considerable controversy. The study reviewed the background of this debate, analysed arguments for and against mandatory vaccination policies, and considered the principles and virtues of clinical, professional, institutional and public health ethics. The study concludes that there is a moral imperative for HCWs to be immune and for healthcare institutions to ensure HCW vaccination, in particular for those working in settings with high-risk groups of patients. If voluntary uptake of vaccination by HCWs is not optimal, patients’ welfare, public health and also the HCW’s own health interests should outweigh concerns about individual autonomy: fair mandatory vaccination policies for HCWs might be acceptable. Differences in diseases, patient and HCW groups at risk and available vaccines should be taken into consideration when adopting the optimal policy.
**ECDC finds limited data on boosting flu vaccine coverage**

*4 Nov 2013 | ECDC*

There is considerable evidence that things like post cards and phone calls likely help boost influenza vaccine coverage in elderly people, but not much is known about how to improve coverage in most other high-risk groups such as pregnant women, according to a lengthy review released today by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). The findings are presented in a 39-page report titled "Review of the Scientific Literature on Drivers and Barriers of Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Coverage in the EU/EEA."

**Immunizing health care workers against influenza: A glimpse into the challenges with voluntary programs and considerations for mandatory policies**

*Nov 2013 | American Journal of Infection Control, Vol 41 | No. 11 | Pages 949-114*

Vaccination of health care workers (HCWs) is an important patient safety initiative. Despite obvious benefits, HCW influenza immunization uptake is low. The study provides analysis of key informant interviews with influenza immunization program planners discussing strategies to achieve high immunization coverage in HCWs, barriers to uptake, and perceptions of mandatory influenza immunization policies. According to the study, participants believed immunization coverage in health care organizations will continue to be suboptimal using existing program strategies. Although participants discussed mandatory immunization as a way to improve uptake, potential obstacles will need to be addressed for this to be implemented successfully.

**Objective 2: increase in vaccine production capacity**

n/a

**Objective 3: research and development**

n/a

**Outbreak news**

**CDC sees little movement in US flu indicators**

*1 Nov 2013 | CIDRAP*

US flu activity increased only slightly last week, though markers stayed well below thresholds, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said today in its weekly update. Elsewhere, flu in Canada remained low, while in Mexico respiratory virus and flu activity indicators showed slightly increasing trends. In Europe, all 27 countries that reported last week had only low-intensity flu activity.

**H1N1**

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**Sitting near infected air passenger may not raise H1N1 risk**

*7 Nov 2013 | Xinhua (China)*

A study of passengers on the flight that carried the first UK 2009 pandemic H1N1 (pH1N1) case-patients found no difference in the pH1N1 attack rate for those seated within two rows of an infectious airline passenger and those seated elsewhere, according to a study today in *Influenza and Other Respiratory Viruses*.

**H5N1**

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**Cambodian boy hospitalized with H5N1 infection**

*8 Nov 2013 | Globaltimes.cn*

Health officials in Cambodia have detected an H5N1 infection in a 10-year-old boy from Kampot province, the country's 24th case so far this year, Xinhua, China's state news agency, reported today.
**Cambodian toddler dies of bird flu, bringing cases to 23 so far this year**  
4 Nov 2013 | Xinhua (China)  
A two-year-old girl from northwestern Pursat province died late last month from the H5N1 virus, bringing the number of the cases to 23 so far this year, a joint statement by the World Health Organization and the Cambodian Health Ministry said Monday. Only 11 cases out of this year's 23 cases survived, the statement said.

**Six-Year-Old Girl Among Few to Survive Bird Flu Infection**  
1 Nov 2013 | The Cambodia Daily  
A 6-year-old girl from Battambang province, the 22nd person this year to contract avian influenza, is one of only half to have survived what has been the worst-ever outbreak of the virus in Cambodia. The child is on her way to full recovery after spending two weeks in Jayavarman VII Hospital in Siem Reap province where she received Tamiflu, an anti-viral treatment for bird flu in humans that works best if delivered speedily, officials said Sunday.

**China reports two new H7N9 cases**  
5 Nov 2013 | CIDRAP  
Chinese health authorities today reported two more novel H7N9 infections from different parts of the country, including in a 3-year-old boy with mild illness who is hospitalized, according to media reports and an early notification from the World Health Organization (WHO).