

Title: Assessing attitudes and behaviors of college freshmen in dormitories related to influenza vaccination

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Purpose: Creighton University (CU) Student Health and our Pharmacy-based Operation Immunization (OI) volunteer group partner annually to provide free influenza immunizations to students and employees. A survey was developed to query students living in freshman dormitories on their behaviors and attitudes towards this immunization.

Design: The survey included demographic questions, questions about influenza-like illness (ILI) experiences, vaccination receipt, student reasons for obtaining or rejecting influenza vaccination during the 2015-16 influenza season and parental level of education. An electronic survey was sent through email to the residents of one dormitory (K) and a paper survey offered twice at each of the two dormitories (G&K) during the last two weeks of April, 2016. This anonymous survey study was exempted from IRB review as Student Health Quality Assurance research.

Findings: A total of 168 dormitory residents (26%) responded to the survey. Responses to the survey indicated an overall vaccination rate of 66% (G:62%; K:71%). Health sciences majors had a higher vaccination rate (80%). Students were most commonly motivated to receive vaccination due to: parents' encouragement (59%), did not want to risk getting influenza (48%), and/or received one annually (36%). Reasons students gave for not receiving vaccination were: their belief of being healthy (41%) and/or not having time (40%). Of students who received the vaccine, 54% claimed to have experienced an ILI between August 15, 2015 and March 31, 2016. Of students who did not receive the vaccine, 67% claimed to have experienced an ILI. Of students who experienced an ILI, 53% missed class or work. There was no clear association between parental level of education and student likelihood of receiving vaccination.

Implications: The study provides a snapshot of current vaccination efforts at CU. This survey suggests that college students have similar attitudes and behaviors related to influenza immunization compared to the general population.