

A Survey of Awareness, Attitude and Behavior of University Students Towards Influenza Vaccination

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Abstract

Objective: The objective was to determine the awareness, attitudes, and behavior of college students regarding influenza vaccination.

Methods: An online survey was conducted at a private, comprehensive university, and included both campus and online students in undergraduate, professional and graduate programs in the academic disciplines of arts and science, health sciences, business, and law. The study was approved by the university's Institutional Review Board. A database of 8992 students was obtained, and a 24-item survey was distributed electronically on student email addresses. To increase response rate, two students randomly selected out of the total participants were offered a \$50 gift card. The survey was distributed in October 2017 using a modified Dillman technique in which an invitation e-mail was sent, with two follow-up emails seven days apart to non-respondents.

Findings: We obtained responses from 3578 students resulting in response rate of 39.8%. Excluding the incomplete responses, a total of 3277 students was analyzed on SPSS 25.0. Out of these, 75% of the respondents received vaccination in 2016-17 and they attributed it to the requirement of their academic program, reducing the risk of influenza and to free vaccines. Not getting vaccinated was linked with 'forgetting' to receive the vaccine and not considering themselves at a 'risk to contract influenza.' Students believed that promotion by the university with posters and e-mails would influence their vaccination decisions.

Implications: This research examined responses and associations for those in arts and sciences, health sciences, business, and law. The methods of promotion of influenza vaccination amongst students can be tailored according to their housing and location of classes.