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Vaccination against Influenza

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Letter to the Editor

An important aspect that should be further considered in any strategy meant to increase the adhesion rate to vaccinations is the role of doctors in Primary Health Care, particularly in the vaccination against influenza, which in many countries is administered mainly by them. To improve vaccination coverage it is necessary to act on several factors: the education of the population with direct information to parents and relatives of the patients to be vaccinated, by means of State intervention with the introduction of compulsory vaccination for groups at risk, of cost reduction or the offer of free vaccinations (something not always possible in some parts of the world). Proper information to people about the risks and the benefits of vaccination is still the “gold standard” of medical intervention. It is often associated to systems of “call-reminder”, which are meant to assist the individual to become aware of when and how to respond to the call of vaccination in the various stages of life. Among these useful tools are now absolutely considered e-mails, SMS, traditional letters, social networks. The results, of course, are not the same at all ages and for all vaccinations.

The “Croce Medica” is an original cultural association, being composed of both doctors and patients interested in the survival of the Regional Public Health Service, an association that primarily deals with training and professional development for physicians, and information for the population, and which, in this context, some years ago developed a project, that is still in progress, aimed at increasing the knowledge about influenza, the ways to prevent it and to reduce the human and economic costs that it still causes in Italy.

The Association “Croce Medica” operates in Friuli Venezia Giulia, Italy, and is promoting the use of posters in family doctor’s offices as well as of e-mails to communicate the patient’s dates and procedures for the vaccination against influenza. Furthermore the Association e-mails its registered doctors a dispatch about influenza as well as a request for information about the illness seasonal evolution in the various areas of Friuli Venezia Giulia.

We are trying to involve more doctors in our project, and we hope 2016 will be the year in which the rate of people over 65 years old vaccinated against influenza will start to increase again.

