



HProImmune

Promotion of Immunization for Health Professionals in Europe



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The Project

The Institute of Preventive Medicine Environmental and Occupational Health, Prolepsis, is coordinating a 3-year European project, which started on September 1, 2011. HProImmune is co-funded by the 2nd EU Public Health Program 2008-2013. The project aims to improve the existing knowledge on barriers concerning Health Care Workers (HCWs) immunization and develop educational material for health professionals as regards the immunizations they need to protect themselves, their families and their patients.



The HPROIMMUNE Project has received funding from the European Union / DG Health and Consumer Protection.



Executive
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The pilot phase of the HproImmune Material - Methodology & Current Results

The HCW Immunization Promotion Toolkit includes guidance, information on the recommended vaccines and presentations addressing the needs of the primary care practitioner and a database of existing EU guidelines, policies and current legislation.

Methodology

According to the project proposal and plan the development of the HproImmune Toolkit material followed the following steps;

- 1 Literature review and overview of recommendations for HCW immunizations in the EU MS
- 2 Research on barriers and enablers towards immunizations in the HCW population
- 3 Workshop on best practices for HCW immunization and rating of best practices

As far as the vaccine fact sheets the recommendations were clear and advised for two sets of information: one addressing the needs of medical personnel and one for nursing and allied health personnel. The above described process allowed the partners to collate the necessary information and data on each recommended vaccine and agree on the contents of each fact sheet.

After designing the fact sheets the first phase of the material development was completed and according to the plan, the material entered a pilot phase. Piloting of the HproImmune material was designed as follows:



- 3 project partners including **Prolepsis** from Greece, **ISS** from Italy and **TUD** from Germany would pilot the material in 2 hospitals in their respective countries and
- 3 project partners including **Nofer Institute** from Poland, **Institute Matei Bals** from Romania and **MTVC** from Lithuania would pilot the material in 50 health professionals practicing in primary health care.

Piloting at the hospital setting as well as the primary care level, includes the organization of an event in the particular hospital, a presentation on the recommended immunizations for hospital personnel and a pre- and post-questionnaire for the evaluation and feedback of the participants on the material.

A piloting guide was developed as well as a pre- and post-questionnaires with **Romtens Institute** the project partner responsible for the Work Package on Evaluation. This newsletter presents the piloting of the HproImmune material in Italy.



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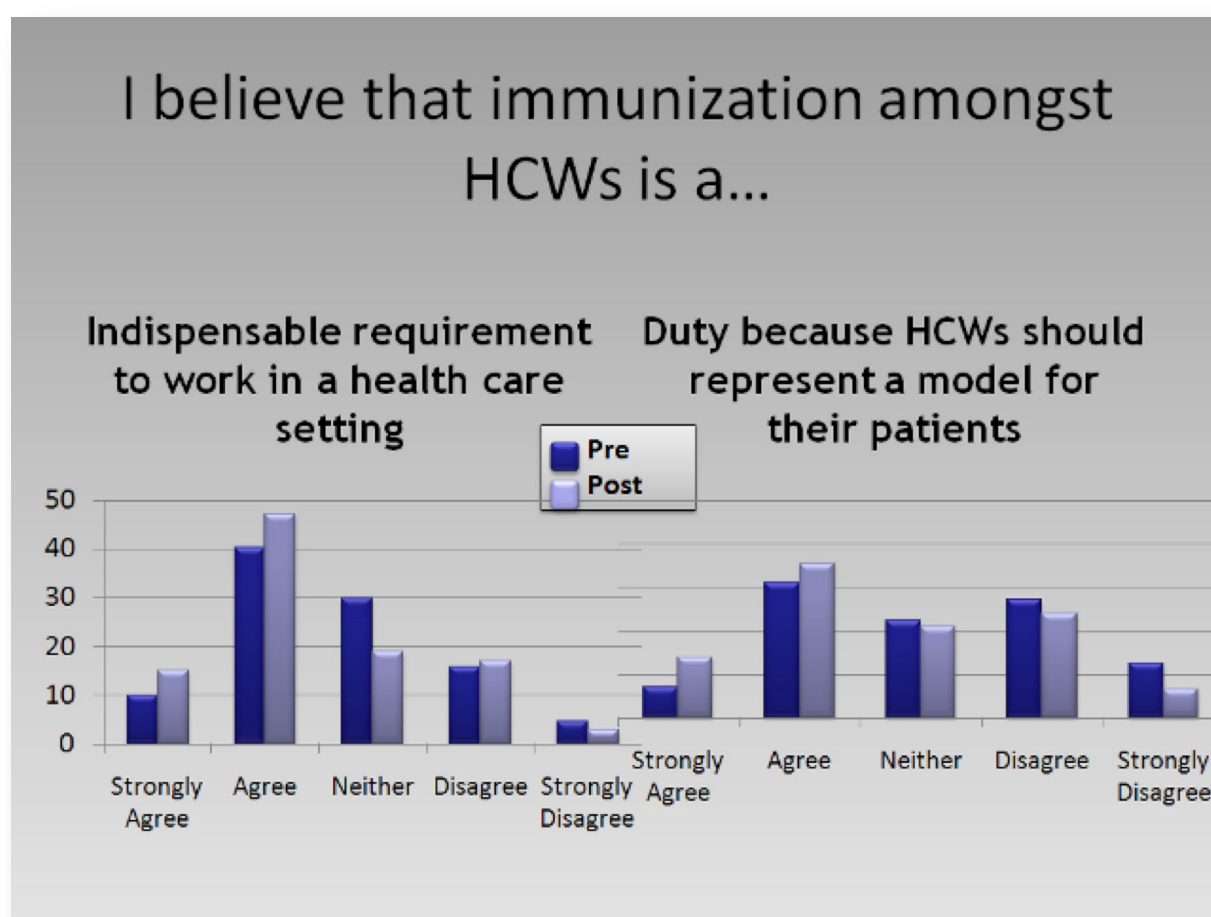
Piloting the Toolkit in Italy

The pilot phase in Italy took place in two public hospitals. A few weeks before the main activity, a meeting with hospital administrators, nurses and doctors of the hospitals was convened in order to explain the project and the objectives of the pilot phase. They were also asked to train their colleagues and distribute the pre-event questionnaires. Apart from that, along with the distribution of leaflets, posters were placed in several hospital wards. Additionally, an e-mail message, with information material (facts sheet) was sent to all hospital staff inviting them to get vaccines.

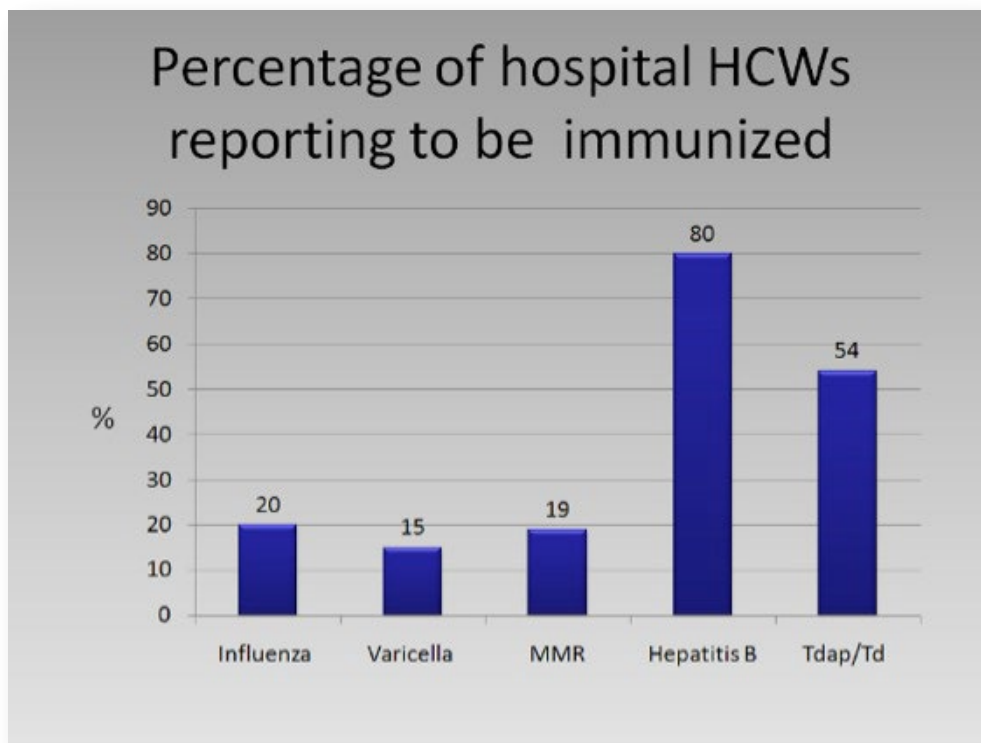


However, the results showed that even though health professionals acknowledge the risk of being exposed to vaccine preventable diseases, a significant number of them are still hesitant regarding immunizations.

Some results of the Italian piloting are presented below:



Vaccination coverage as estimated in the two hospitals is low, well below the recommended coverage, with the exception of the vaccine against Hepatitis B.



The analysis of the questionnaires shows the general attitude of the health care professionals on immunizations:

- 62% of HCW received influenza vaccination for the first time in the period 2008 -2011; 36% received one shot every year, 56% never revaccinated after the first time
- 48% of HCWs immunized were nurses
- 60% of immunized HCWs have been employed for more than 10 years
- Considering influenza not a serious disease was the main (40%) reason for refusing immunization
- Avoiding getting sick was the main (31%) reason for getting vaccinated

As far as educational and communication toolkit is concerned, 71% saw at least one communication tool and, out of these, 61% found the information useful.

In general, compliance to vaccination as regards health professionals is strongly influenced by several factors such as: personal risk perception, fear of adverse events, distrust, competing priorities, availability of vaccine, etc.

According to the experience from the pilot phase in Italy, vaccination campaigns based only on information are not effective in increasing vaccination coverage. However, a combination of different strategies and approaches can improve vaccination coverage among HCWs.

In particular, Maria Cristina Rota and Valeria Alfonsi (Istituto Superiore di Sanità) who led the pilot phase in Italy, suggest:

- ▶ Wide dissemination of tailored information
- ▶ Availability of vaccine free of charge
- ▶ Personnel dedicated to the vaccination of HCWs in each facility
- ▶ Promotion through Peer vaccination
- ▶ Economic incentives/disincentives
- ▶ Declination form
- ▶ Consider mandatory immunizations for HCWs.



Partnership

● Main Partner:

- Institute of Preventive Medicine, Environmental and Occupational Health, Prolepsis, Greece

● Associated Partners:

- National Institute of Infectious Diseases Prof Dr Matei Bals - *Romania*
- Nofer Institute of Occupational Medicine - *Poland*
- Mokymų Tyrimų ir Vystymo Centras *Lithuania*
- Istituto Superiore Di Sanità - *Italy*
- Fundatia Romtens - *Romania*
- Cyprus University of Technology *Cyprus*
- Technische Universität Dresden *Germany*
- National Hellenic Nurses Association - *Greece*
- Hellenic Center for Disease Control and Prevention - *Greece*



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