

EU Information Day

Athens, 8 July 2014

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Health Care Workers (HCWs) & Immunizations

Known, however always important issue with public health (PH) implications



Health Care Workers (HCWs) & Immunizations

Communicable diseases represent one of the most important occupational risks for health professionals with serious implications for PH!

- ✓ Seasonal Influenza
- ✓ Measles
- ✓ Pertussis
- ✓ SARS
- ✓ MERS CoV
- ✓ Ebola Hemorrhagic Fever



Risks

- Risk for the health of HCWs
- Risk for the health of vulnerable patients (neonates, immune-compromised)
- Risk for the general public in the event of outbreaks
- Impact on the capacity of the health system in the event of outbreaks!



Health policies as regards HCW immunizations

Mandatory vaccination (requirement for starting clinical work)

OR

Recommendation?



The reality in Europe

- Data not collected systematically (some member states only, or occasional studies)
- Low (or very low) vaccination coverage:

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up to 10-20%: measles
rubella
pertussis
seasonal influenza
about 50%: hepatitis B
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What we learned from A(H1N1)2009

Large percent of health professionals stated that they would **hesitate coming to work** in the event of a pandemic wave with high case fatality



What we learned from A(H1N1)2009

- Low overall vaccination coverage (with the exception of Scandinavian countries)
- Public debates with medical personnel expressing serious doubts about vaccine safety and efficacy!



The HProlmmune project-l

- Co-funded by the 2nd Health Programme of the EU (2008-2013)
- To develop **tailored material** for health professionals aiming at increasing their vaccination coverage
- >10 partners
 - >7 languages (reflected in the final deliverable)



The HProlmmune project-II

- State-of-the-art report and
- Quantitative research and
- Survey of HCWs around Europe for the beliefs and barriers towards immunizations
- 5.000+ responses
- Selection of good practices
- Led to the development of our Toolkit



The question remains

Should policy makers introduce **up-to-date immunizations as a requirement**for starting clinical work for every health

professional?





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