



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Vaccine

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/vaccine

Flu vaccination communication in Europe: What does the government communicate and how?

Anne Wiebke Ohlrogge^{a,b,*}, L. Suzanne Suggs^{b,c}

^a Department of International Health, CAPHRI School of Public Health and Primary Care, Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences, Maastricht University, The Netherlands

^b BeCHANGE Research Group, Institute for Public Communication, Faculty of Health Sciences, Università della Svizzera italiana, Lugano, Switzerland

^c Institute for Global Health Innovation, Faculty of Medicine, Imperial College London, United Kingdom

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Available online xxxx

Keywords:

Vaccination behaviour
Health communication
Flu vaccination
Social marketing
Europe

ABSTRACT

Introduction: The Flu vaccine is the most effective measure to prevent influenza. Yet, vaccination rates remain at sub-optimal levels, with 10%–29% coverage rates in the general population of the EU. As mistrust in vaccines has increased, effective strategies are needed and one is communication. The aim of this research is to identify vaccination recommendations of the health ministries in 5 European Member States and to investigate the communication strategies used.

Methods: Two methods were employed in this study. A review of flu vaccination recommendations in the European Union and five Members States (Austria, Germany, Malta, Ireland and United Kingdom). Next a content analysis was conducted of flu vaccination communication in those six contexts.

Results and discussion: All countries recommend flu vaccination as a primary protection tool, but they differed in their recommendations for various target audiences. Channels for communication included seven websites and 42 other materials. The main messages used were gained framed promoting *protection*, either for oneself, family or patients. Most communications provided basic information replying on providing facts and knowledge about the flu and the benefits of vaccination. No information on the development of the communication or its effects were found.

Conclusion: Communicating flu vaccination as a protective tool is common across countries and is consistent with the benefits of vaccination. Furthermore, the communications in the countries were not consistent with their recommendations. As the recommendations vary across and within countries, communication becomes a challenge. They should, at a minimum, be consistent with EU and country specific recommendations.

© 2018 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Vaccination is one of the top ten public health achievements of the 20th century and evidence demonstrating its benefits is both strong and abundant [1,2]. Flu vaccine is one of the most effective measures to prevent influenza, which is estimated to cause over three to five million cases of severe illness and approximately 250,000 to 500,000 deaths worldwide per year [3,4]. Yet, vaccination rates remain at sub-optimal levels, with 10% to 29% coverage rates in the general population of the European Union (EU) [5]. The EU sets a target of 75% flu vaccine coverage rates (VCR) within countries for risk groups [6]. However, risk groups do not reach optimal coverage levels with, for example, older adults having a median of 44.7% VCR of the 24 reporting Member States in the sea-

sons of 2011–12 and 2012–13 [7]. Despite clear evidence that vaccination protects people and populations, mistrust in vaccines has increased as has a re-emergence of anti-vaccination movements [8,2,9].

As illustrated through the series of papers in the special issue of *Vaccine on Vaccination Hesitancy* [10], effective interventions are urgently needed. One strategy is communication, which is an important part of programmes and interventions addressing determinants of vaccine uptake [5,11–13]. There are certain challenges which cannot be overcome by medical approaches alone, but effective communication actions are needed [14]. When planning an immunisation programme, a communication strategy should be included from the outset to guarantee quality and smooth implementation of the intervention [13]. Vaccination communication campaigns have shown a positive increase in vaccination rates in many countries and contexts [15–20]. Many conclude that strategically designed communication is important and that targeted communication is necessary to increase uptake.

* Corresponding author at: Institute for Public Communication, Università della Svizzera italiana, Via G. Buffi 13, CH-6900 Lugano, Switzerland.

E-mail address: a.ohlrogge@alumni.maastrichtuniversity.nl (A.W. Ohlrogge).

To assist Member States in developing strategic communication for flu vaccination, the European Centres for Disease Control (ECDC) offers a communication toolkit, which was developed under the expertise of ECDC's public health capacity and communication unit and ECDC's influenza programme [21]. The toolkit stresses the importance of targeted messages and provides concrete examples about how messages could be formulated and what potential barriers the messages could address. For instance, it states that core messages for HCWs could be "Protect your patients! Protect yourself!" and for high risk groups "influenza is a serious disease" [22] and that careful consideration of distribution channels is important [21].

How messages are framed is a key consideration when designing flu vaccination messages [21,23]. Prospect theory proposes that people are persuaded differently when communication emphasises the benefits or the costs of the choice [24–26]. Message framing is the way in which messages are formulated and which aspects of the messages are emphasized [24,25,27]; that is typically, gain-framed and loss-framed [18]. While it has been proposed that gain-framed messages are more effective for behaviours with certain outcome, and loss-framed messages for uncertain outcomes [26], findings were not conclusive [28]. The majority of vaccination message framing research tested communication for HPV (human papillomavirus) and found loss-framed messages to be more effective than gain-framed messages [29–32], yet some support for gain-framed messages has been found [33].

The aim of this research was to understand how governments in Europe communicate about flu vaccination. Specifically, it aimed to identify flu vaccination recommendations, and the strategies used in their communication. It then compares recommendation and communication consistency in each setting.

2. Methods

2.1. Study design

This descriptive study used two methodologies to examine recommendations and communication activities in five European countries (Austria, Germany, Malta, Ireland and United Kingdom (UK)) and the ECDC, an agency of the EU. First, A review of flu vaccination recommendations was done. Second, a content analysis of vaccination communication was conducted. The content analysis was conducted from 25.04.2016 to 10.06.2016 and included all communications available online during that period.

2.2. Sample selection

The selected countries were chosen to include large and small Member States with different health and payment systems. The ECDC is the EU agency responsible for Europe's defence against infectious diseases and is referred to in the Council Recommendations on influenza vaccination, which were established in 2009 by the Council of the European Union [6]. For each country, the websites of the health ministries were searched. Further, the EU and the ECDC websites and relevant links from those websites were searched for flu vaccination communication (see Table 1). Communication in English or German language was included. Communication provided by other stakeholders, such as health insurance companies, was excluded.

2.3. Data collection

To identify the recommendations and communication regarding flu vaccination, the websites were scanned for the keywords "influenza" and "flu vaccination" in combination with "recommen-

Table 1
Sources of recommendations and communications.

Source	Website
	<i>Recommendation</i>
Austria	http://www.bmg.gv.at/home/Impfplan http://www.bmg.gv.at/home/Schwerpunkte/Krankheiten/Grippe_Saisonale_Influenza_
Germany	http://www.bmg.bund.de/themen/praevention/gesundheitsgefahren/influenza.html http://www.rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/I/Influenza/IPV/IPV_Node.html?cms_lv2=2370434&cms_box=1&cms_current=Gripp http://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Kommissionen/STIKO/Empfehlungen/Impfempfehlungen_node.html
Ireland	http://health.gov.ie/blog/press-release/minister-varadkar-hse-launch-annual-seasonal-flu-vaccination-campaign/ http://www.hse.ie/eng/health/az/F/Flu-influenza-,seasonal/Preventing-seasonal-flu.html http://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/
Malta	https://health.gov.mt/en/phc/pchyhi/Pages/Influenza-Vaccine.aspx
UK	https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immunisation-against-infectious-disease-the-green-book http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/flu/Pages/Introduction.aspx
EU	http://ec.europa.eu/health/vaccination/influenza/index_en.htm http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:348:0071:0072:EN:PDF http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/healthtopics/seasonal_influenza/vaccines/Pages/vaccines.aspx
	<i>Communication on websites</i>
Austria	http://bmg.gv.at/home/Schwerpunkte/Krankheiten/Grippe_Saisonale_Influenza_
Germany	https://www.impfen-info.de/ http://www.rki.de/DE/Content/Infekt/Impfen/ImpfungenAZ/Influenza/Influenza.html
Ireland	http://www.hse.ie/eng/health/az/F/Flu-influenza-,seasonal/
Malta	https://health.gov.mt/en/phc/pchyhi/Pages/Influenza-Vaccine.aspx
UK	http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/winterhealth/pages/fluandthefluvaccine.aspx
EU	http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/healthtopics/seasonal_influenza/Pages/index.aspx
	<i>Communication on other channels</i>
Austria	–
Germany	http://www.impfen-info.de/mediathek/printmaterialien/
Ireland	http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/Campaigns/flu.html
Malta	–
UK	http://www.nhsemployers.org/campaigns/flu-fighter/nhs-flu-fighterhttps://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/34-stay-well-this-winter/resources
EU	http://ecdc.europa.eu/en/healthtopics/seasonal_influenza/communication_toolkit/Pages/communication_toolkit.aspx

ation" and "communication/campaign". Subsequently, a snowballing technique was implemented that followed links to vaccination recommendations and/or communications within the initial list of websites. A total of 14 governmental websites were found for flu vaccination recommendations. For the communications seven websites were discovered and 42 non-website materials (offered on five websites) were collected.

The recommendations for flu vaccination from each country were collected and compared. The communications were divided into two parts, websites and non-websites, because both communication channel work differently. Websites are pull driven, meaning people go and search for them, while non-websites are most often pushed to people, available as hard copies in clinics and pharmacies. Any communication materials offered on websites by the ministries or agency that were designed to be handed out (e.g. flyer), put up (e.g. posters) or other information material, which is used to inform about flu vaccination were collected. Materials that could not be used as such (e.g. logos) were excluded.

The recommendations were checked per country for overall population, children, older adults, people with chronic diseases,

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/11009711>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/11009711>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)