



BETTER HEALTH THROUGH VACCINATION: EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES

The value of immunisation

The future of healthcare in Europe will be focused increasingly on prevention. Improving the population's health through prevention, rather than depending on cures, is an economic priority. In particular, vaccines combat many long-established infectious diseases, and they are tomorrow's hope for emerging health threats.

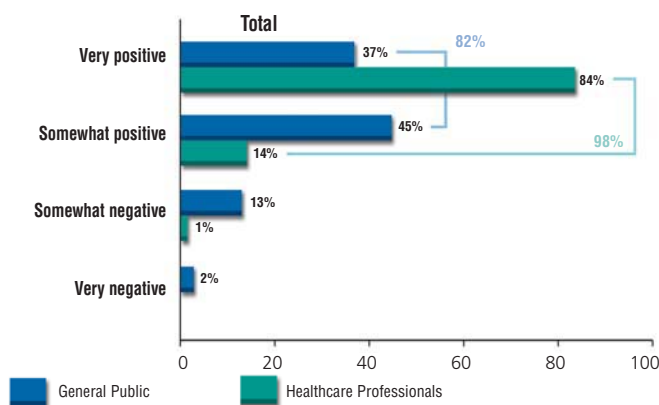
EU health authorities recognize vaccination to be a key prevention tool, and it is one of the most cost-effective health interventions available. Thanks to well-conducted vaccination programmes in industrialised countries, many infectious diseases are close to elimination, even eradication. Such vaccination programmes led the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 2002 to declare the European Union a polio free region. Though today's vaccines are highly effective and safe, many challenges remain. For example, bacterial or viral infections from Haemophilus influenzae type b or the measles virus remain a threat to the health of those individuals who have not been vaccinated. It is in the interest of society to maintain a healthy population by using vaccines to prevent the outbreak and spread of diseases.

Individual decisions on vaccination should not be based on fear, but on a rational assessment of the available data. Consequently, in 2004, the European Vaccine Manufacturers (EVM), commissioned a quantitative survey by Psyma International Medical to assess the perception of vaccines and vaccination by the general public and healthcare professionals. The results of the survey are presented below.

Perception of vaccines and vaccination

Vaccination is perceived as important and necessary

POSITIVE PERCEPTION OF VACCINES BY HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC



	D	E	F	I	UK
Very positive	23%	44%	47%	32%	47%
Somewhat positive	70%	91%	86%	82%	91%
Somewhat negative	57%	47%	35%	46%	36%
Very negative	25%	9%	13%	17%	9%
Very positive + Somewhat positive	15%	6%	12%	16%	12%
Very positive + Somewhat positive + Somewhat negative	2%	-	1%	1%	-
Very positive + Somewhat positive + Somewhat negative + Very negative	2%	1%	3%	2%	2%
Very positive + Somewhat positive + Somewhat negative + Very negative + Very negative	1%	-	1%	-	-

GP: Q. A4a (c); Base: n=5,025 General public respondents
HCP: Q. B1a (c); base: n=803 Healthcare Professionals (D: n=161, E: n=160, F: n=161, UK: n=1004)

General Public:

- 82% of the general public across all five countries have an overall positive perception of vaccines, and believe that vaccination is important and necessary.
- The main reasons that vaccines are favoured among the general public are because they not only prevent diseases but can also reduce their prevalence and spread.
- By contrast, 15% of those interviewed across the five countries are sceptical of vaccines, mainly due to fear of adverse effects or the belief that vaccinations are unnecessary.

Healthcare Professionals:

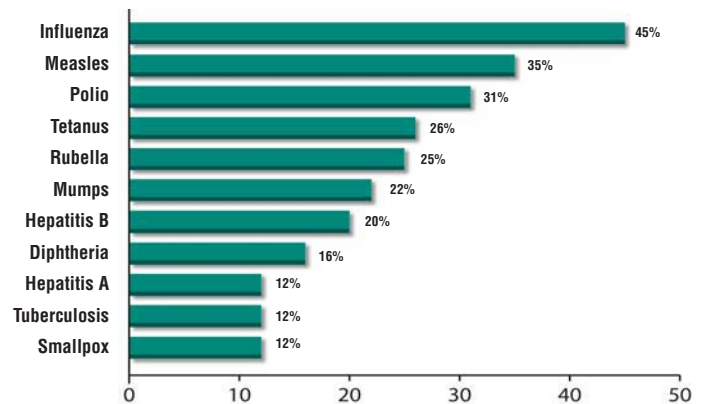
- 98% of healthcare professionals across the five countries have a positive perception of vaccines and the value of vaccination.
- When questioned on the reasons for this positive perception, healthcare professionals stated that prevention is important (66%), that vaccinations are better than catching the disease itself (13%), and that vaccines have minimal side effects (8%).
- Healthcare professionals are very confident about the efficacy and safety of vaccines, and they are markedly more favourable to combination vaccines than the public.

BETTER HEALTH THROUGH VACCINATION: EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES

Awareness of vaccine-preventable diseases is relatively low

- Nearly half of the public (45%) across the five countries regard influenza as an important yet preventable disease. The level of awareness of other diseases is lower, some markedly so. As the chart shows, levels of awareness ranged from 35% for measles down to 12% for hepatitis A.
- Spain has the greatest awareness of influenza (61%), while for the UK greatest awareness was for measles (53%), rubella (40%) and mumps (45%). In France, the greatest awareness is of polio and tetanus (40% and 42% respectively), and there is a substantial awareness of tuberculosis (26%). In Germany, awareness is greatest for diphtheria and hepatitis A (27% and 22% respectively).

OVERALL AWARENESS OF VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASES



GP: Q. B1 (o); Base: n=5,025 General Public Respondents - mention >= 12%
 weighted data: D: n=1404; E: n=689; F: n=988; I: n=996; UK: n=948

Factors influencing the vaccination decision

The general public regards physicians and health authorities as highly influential

INFLUENTIAL FACTORS IN GETTING VACCINATED

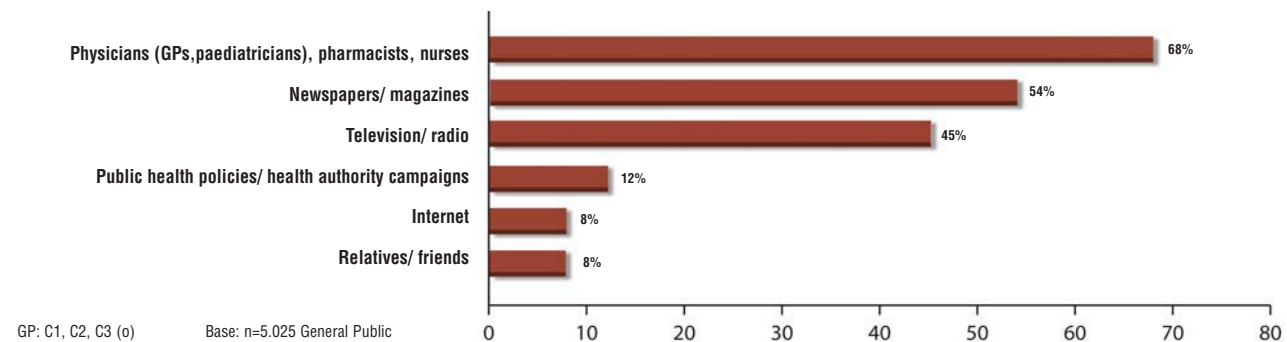
	Total	D	E	F	I	UK
Physicians / doctors / nurses / occupational health doctors	7.9	7.6	8.4	7.9	7.6	8.4
International Health Organisation	6.1	5.3	6.8	6.3	6.4	6.2
Government officials / local health authorities	5.8	5.2	6.9	5.8	6.2	5.6
Pharmacists	5.0	4.6	5.0	5.3	4.5	5.7
Friends / relatives / family	5.0	5.3	4.4	5.1	4.4	5.7
Midwives / kindergarden staff	5.0	4.4	5.1	5.7	4.1	6.1
Information from vaccine companies	3.6	3.4	3.7	3.7	3.2	4.4

GP: Q. D3 (c); Base: n=5,025 General public respondents Weighted data: D: n=1404, E: n=689, F: n=988, I: n=996, UK: n=948 Unweighted data: D: n=1007, E: n=1001, F: n=1012, : 996, UK: n=1004

- The data showed that healthcare professionals have the strongest influence in the decision to get vaccinated (7.9 on a scale of 1-10 with 10 being 'very influential').

The educational role of physicians is critical

KEY INFORMATION SOURCES REGARDING VACCINES IN GENERAL



GP: C1, C2, C3 (o) Base: n=5,025 General Public Respondents

- More than two thirds of the public (68%) saw physicians as an important source of information, followed by newspapers and magazines (54%) and TV/radio (45%). Public health policies and health authority campaigns were considered by only 12% as an important information source. For childhood vaccines, paediatricians are a leading information source for 81% of parents.



The national vaccination calendars are essential tools for doctors and the general public

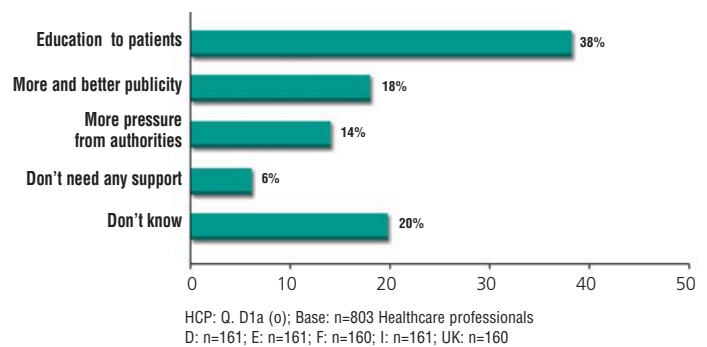
- The national vaccination calendars are widely recognised as key tools by 91% of healthcare professionals when recommending that patients be vaccinated.
- The reasons cited by the general public for requesting vaccination included a renewal or a booster of a vaccine listed in the official vaccination calendar (48%) and the fear of becoming infected (32%).

Call to action

Healthcare professionals expect more support from health authorities in promoting vaccination

- One conclusion from the data is that although a large proportion of the public (82%) believes that vaccination is important and necessary, awareness of vaccine-preventable diseases remains relatively low (from 45% for influenza down to 12% for hepatitis A). Expanded information campaigns from health authorities should address this gap in public awareness.
- Patients rely heavily on doctors for information on vaccination requirements. In turn, healthcare providers demand more support and better information from public health authorities to improve levels of vaccination.
- 38% of physicians demand more patient education from health authorities to enhance vaccine coverage; 18% demand better and more media publicity, and 14% support greater pressure from authorities.

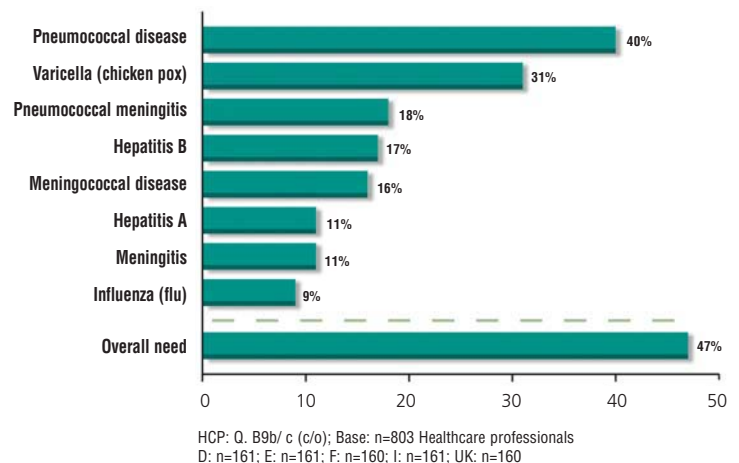
SUPPORT REQUESTED FROM HEALTH AUTHORITIES TO BOOST VACCINATION COVERAGE RATE



Vaccination calendars should be extended

- Vaccination calendars are used as key tools by both physicians and the general public. However, there are several vaccines also on the market, such as those targeted at hepatitis B, invasive pneumococcal disease, or meningococcal meningitis, which may not appear on all vaccination calendars. Without inclusion in the calendar, there is rarely an informed discussion between the doctor and the patient about these vaccinations.
- The survey showed that 50% of healthcare professionals want an extension of official vaccination calendars to include vaccines for invasive pneumococcal disease, varicella, meningococcal meningitis, hepatitis B, and other vaccine-preventable diseases, which are available but not widely included in their national vaccination calendars.

VACCINES RECOMMENDED TO BE ADDED TO LOCAL IMMUNISATION SCHEDULES





Conclusions

Protection from many infectious diseases can be secured through vaccination programmes. In spite of continuing progress, the survey reveals that additional actions are required to support three key areas:

- **Information.** Adults continue to rely mainly on doctors' advice about vaccination for themselves and their children. There is insufficient information available to the public on vaccine-preventable diseases; consequently, the level of the public's awareness is low. One conclusion is that better public information and education are needed.
- **Record keeping and tracking.** Protection from many infectious diseases can be secured through vaccination. It is for health professionals, health authorities and other stake-holders to create a framework that guarantees the best immunisation coverage possible. This could be aided by providing adults and the elderly with the means to track vaccination renewals.
- **Guidelines on vaccine recommendations.** There are significant differences between Member States in the use of vaccines. With increasing mobility, a harmonised EU approach for vaccine recommendations would be beneficial.

“Immunization is a cost-effective and life-saving intervention which prevents needless suffering through sickness, disability and deaths. It benefits all people – not only through improvements in health and life expectancy but also through its social and economic impact at the global, national and community level.”

WHO Global Immunization Vision and Strategy - Strategic Framework (2006-2015)

Survey on the perception of vaccines and vaccination

Objectives:

- Measure perception and practices towards vaccination among stakeholders in 5 European countries: France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK.
- Provide reliable information to the medical community and health authorities
- Track usage patterns and attitudes over time

Methodology:

- Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI) using structured questions

Target Groups:

- General public: 5025 interviews (about 1000 per country) of a representative sample of the adult population (>18 years), including two subgroups; parents (with at least one child aged 0-6 years) and the elderly (>65 years)
- Healthcare professionals (HCPs): 803 interviews (about 160 per country), including General Practitioners, Paediatricians, Hygienists and Nurses (according to country specific practices) selected from those that either recommend or administer vaccines.

For further information, please visit:
www.evm-vaccines.org



Rue du Trône, 108
B-1050 Brussels
Belgium
Tel: +32 (0)2 626 2567
Fax: +32 (0)2 626 2566
Email: info@evm.vaccines.org



Gartenweg 2
90607 Ruckersdorf
Nürnberg - Germany

Tel. +49 (0)911 95785-0
Fax +49 (0)911 95785-33
Email: info@psyma-international.com

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