



EVM Newsletter



Autumn 2004

Perception of Vaccines and Vaccination:

Result of a survey among General Public and Healthcare Professionals

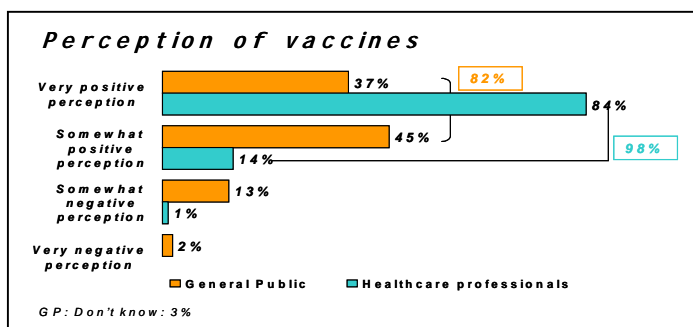
A major survey on the perception of vaccines and vaccination in five European countries has been undertaken with the aim of measuring usage and attitudes and to develop a database for vaccine related issues. The survey was commissioned by EVM and conducted by an independent market research company.

Main findings

- The general public (82%) and, in particular, the physicians (98%) perceive vaccines very positively.
- the major drivers for vaccination for the public are fear of getting the disease and the official vaccination calendar.
- the main information sources are the physician (for the public) and scientific journals (for the physician).
- vaccine coverage of children and adolescents was generally viewed by interviewed physicians as satisfactory but coverage of adults and the elderly was perceived as being too low.
- a small proportion of the population (15%) reported some concerns about vaccination and these included fear of being over vaccinated and concerns about side effects.

Perception of vaccines

Vaccination is regarded as very important by members of the public. This holds true for all countries and subgroups. Interviewed physicians are even more positive about the benefits of vaccination.



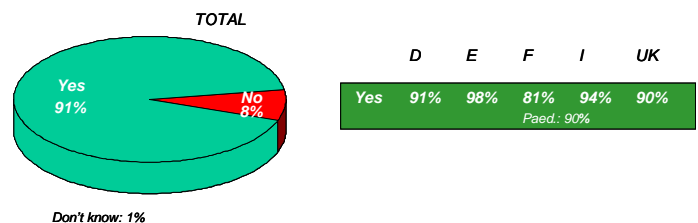
The two major reasons for this positive attitude to vaccines were that prevention is important and it will stop the spread of the disease.

Vaccine use

The **major drivers** for the public when deciding on vaccination are **individual concerns** (fear of getting the disease) and **vaccine recommendations**. The official vaccination calendar was regarded as important by both the public and by physicians.

Official vaccination calendar: a key tool for physicians

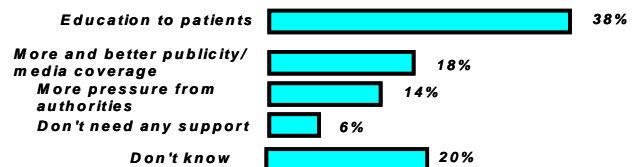
Is the immunisation schedule/ official vaccination calendar an important support when recommending patients to be vaccinated?



For the general public the **key influential players** are the **physicians** and **health authorities**. However different perceptions were seen between European countries as a result of variations in national vaccination policies.

The doctor's perception of the current vaccine usage was that it was about right for infants but that the coverage for adults and for the elderly was too low.

Physician's proposals for boosting vaccination



Proposals for improving coverage included better education and more publicity. When members of the public were interviewed regarding the reasons for not getting vaccinated the most frequently reported response was *I tend to forget the renewal of my vaccines*.

Almost all interviewed physicians claimed to be proactively recommending vaccines and, indeed, about half were in favour of adding additional vaccines to the immunization schedule.

EVM's mission:

- to create a supportive environment for improved vaccine protection and coverage in the interest of the individual and the community;
- to promote vaccine R&D to meet new challenges for innovative vaccine applications against infectious and other types of diseases;
- to foster a favourable policy climate for the vaccine industry to bring new vaccines to the world.

EVM Members:

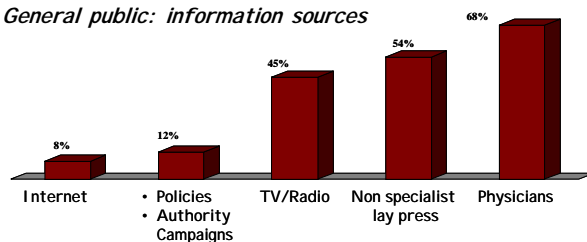
- [Aventis Pasteur](#)
- [Aventis Pasteur MSD](#)
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- [Berna Biotech](#)
- [Chiron Vaccines](#)
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<http://www.evm-vaccines.org>

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General public: information sources



Information sources on vaccines

Health care professionals are still considered by the general public to be the best source of information on vaccines although this picture changes for subgroups of patients.

Thus, while some 80% of parents would accept their paediatrician's recommendation on vaccines, for adult vaccination a more complex picture emerges depending in part on the physician's advice but also on patient request, whereas for the elderly public health campaigns also have a significant impact on the uptake of flu vaccination.

For the physicians, the key sources of information were scientific journals, public health policies and the Internet.

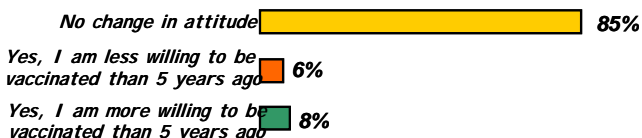
Perceived Trends

Members of the public indicated that attitudes towards vaccinations had remained largely unchanged over the last five years.

Looking forward over the next five years the physicians, in general, predicted an increase in vaccine usage across all patient groups. The reasons advanced for this enhanced coverage were:

- More awareness as a result of better information
- Pressure from government programmes
- New vaccines will become available

General public attitude to vaccination over the last 5 years



Conclusions

Even if vaccines seem to have a very high acceptance rate among the public and physicians, there are some challenges to be addressed in order to further improve vaccine uptake (e.g. underestimation of the seriousness of the vaccine preventable diseases and concerns about possible side effects). The uptake of vaccines is strongly linked to health authority recommendations and to vaccination schedules. Physicians play a key role in encouraging vaccination.

A joint effort from public authorities, healthcare professionals, media and the vaccine industry is needed to further improve immunization coverage, using credible and comprehensible information from trustworthy authorities.

Survey: scope

The aim of the survey was to measure usage patterns and attitudes towards vaccination and to develop a database for vaccine related issues. The intention is to track changes in usage patterns and attitudes by conducting repeat surveys.

The survey was carried out among general public and healthcare professionals in five major European countries and a total of 5828 interviews were made (see table below).

| Number of interviews | |
|----------------------|------|
| No. of interviews; | |
| GPs | 362 |
| Paediatrician | 240 |
| Hygienists/Nurse | 201 |
| Total Healthcare | 803 |
| General Public | 5025 |
| Total Interviews | 5828 |