

CHANGING THE CONVERSATION ON ADULT INFLUENZA VACCINATION



Campaign Overview: Brazil

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Executive Summary

Brazil has a comprehensive influenza vaccination program to protect at-risk individuals including children under the age of six years, older people 60 years and over, indigenous peoples, pregnant women, puerperal women (up to 45 days after delivery), health workers, educational professionals, prisoners, prison staff, low-income adolescents and young people aged 12 to 21 years, and those with noncommunicable diseases and other special clinical conditions.

Brazil appears to have one of the highest influenza vaccination rates of older adults (98.2%) and those with chronic conditions (86.3%) in the world. Compliance of the target populations is largely attributable to the strong government-led influenza vaccination campaign which relies not only on remote communication but also on face-to-face mobilization.

The national campaign is highly organized and well-planned with clear target audiences, appropriate timelines, evidence-based information and the use of multiple communication tools. Campaign messages are widespread and visible in everyday life through websites, television, radio, newspapers, bus and subway panels. An enhanced and unique part of the Brazil's campaign is a series of activities on the national mobilization day, including consultations and services across over 41,800 mobile vaccination spots.

By contrast, the campaign led by the civil society is relatively weak and underdeveloped. Only the Brazilian Society of Diabetes and the Brazilian Society of Immunizations have provided messages about influenza prevention and adult vaccination to their members and the general public.

Demographic Details

Brazil, in 2018, had an estimated population of 209.5 million with 21.3% under the age of 15 years and 8.9% aged 65 years and over.¹ The demographic landscape will change dramatically in the coming decades as older people will significantly outnumber children despite the overall population growth. By 2050, 22.7% of the total population will be aged 65 years and over and only 15% under the age of 15 years.²

Population ageing is associated with an increased prevalence and burden of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). In 2016, 74% of all deaths were attributable to NCDs.³ Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the leading cause of death responsible for 28% of total deaths. Chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes collectively contributed to 11% of deaths.³

Context

Vaccine preventable diseases such as influenza pose a real and urgent threat to older people whose immunity is weaker not only because of age but with associated chronic comorbid conditions. From December to August 2019, 4,907 Brazilians were hospitalized due to influenza, with 917 deaths. Of the total deaths associated with influenza, 639 (69.7%) were those aged 60 years and over.⁴

Vaccination is generally considered an effective tool for influenza control. In 1999 the federal government of Brazil first launched the annual vaccination campaign to educate and vaccinate susceptible citizens.⁵

In 2019, the 21st National Influenza Vaccination Campaign was launched and continued from the 10th April to 31st May.⁴ In line with the World Health Organization focus the priority groups for free vaccination included children under the age of six years, older people 60 years and over, indigenous peoples, pregnant women, puerperal women (up to 45 days after delivery), health workers, educational professionals, prisoners, prison staff, low-income adolescents and young people aged 12 to 21 years, those with chronic NCDs and other special clinical conditions.^{6,7}

Central to the campaign are messages broadcast on television, radio, newspapers, social networks, bus and subway panels with the slogan “Don’t put your life and your loved one at risk. Get a flu shot.”

In addition, the Ministry of Health in partnership with state and municipal health agencies celebrate a national vaccination day “D-Day” on 4th of May in an intensive effort to mobilize the most at-risk populations across the country for timely vaccination.

Brazil’s Vaccination Campaign has made tremendous strides in mobilizing citizens of all ages. The coverage goal in 1999 was set at 70% of the target population, and this remained until 2007. From 2008 to 2017 the target was 80% and since then 90%.⁴ Goals were reached each year with the exception of 2000 when the coverage was only 64.7%.⁴

In the 2019 campaign, more than 53.5 million people in at-risk groups were vaccinated, reaching the national target of 90%, which is much higher than most developed countries.⁸ Of special note is that 98.2% of Brazilians aged 60 years and over and 86.3% of those with chronic conditions were vaccinated in 2019 campaign.⁴

Government Campaign

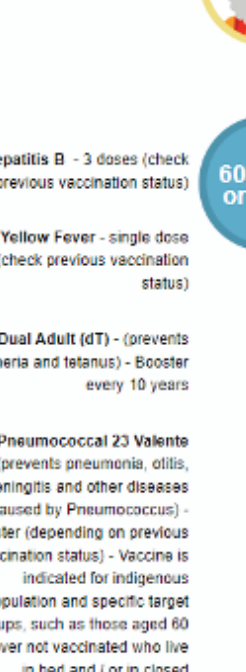
National Immunization Program

Brazil’s National Immunization Program (NIP) was born in 1973 with a goal towards the control, eradication and elimination of vaccine preventable diseases through the provision of free vaccines to those most at-risk.⁹

Influenza vaccine was introduced into the NIP for people aged 65 years and over in 1999. In 2000 the target groups were expanded to include children 6 months to 5 years old, pregnant women, people aged 60 years and over and other vulnerable groups as identified in the annual National Influenza Vaccination Campaign.⁵

Aligned with the NIP, the national vaccination calendar is updated annually by the Ministry of Health. It provides guidance on the vaccination schedule across a person’s life including the

The Ministry of Health also created an animated timeline of the vaccination schedules by main target groups of the NIP to help Brazilians keep their vaccinations up to date.¹⁰ The timeline lists four vaccines available to people aged 60 years and older, in addition to the annual flu vaccine – hepatitis B, yellow fever, dual adult (dT) and pneumococcal pneumonia.

[illegible]

Old man

There are four vaccines available to people aged 60 and older, plus the annual flu vaccine:

60 years or older

- Hepatitis B** - 3 doses (check previous vaccination status)
- Yellow Fever** - single dose (check previous vaccination status)
- Dual Adult (dT)** - (prevents diphtheria and tetanus) - Booster every 10 years
- Pneumococcal 23 Valente** (prevents pneumonia, otitis, meningitis and other diseases caused by *Pneumococcus*) - booster (depending on previous vaccination status) - Vaccine is indicated for indigenous population and specific target groups, such as those aged 60 and over not vaccinated who live in bed and / or in closed institutions.
- Influenza** - One dose (yearly)

The Ministry of Health provides information (via a website) to the general public and health care professionals on influenza as well as promotional materials downloadable at no charge.¹¹

Blog

The relationship between influenza and certain chronic diseases is explained in several blog articles. For example, in the blog “Asthma can be deadly if not treated properly” those with asthma (and their families) are strongly recommended to be vaccinated against influenza as it is a potential trigger of fatal complications such as cardiopulmonary arrest.¹³ Similarly, information about the increased risk of a heart attack and bronchiolitis for those with cardiovascular diseases and chronic lung diseases was conveyed in a series of blogs.^{14,15}

In the 2019 campaign, the Ministry of Health developed several posters and banners to encourage those who are eligible for the free influenza vaccination.¹⁶

All priority groups are listed on the poster and banner, including people aged 60 years and over and those with chronic conditions. There is also a highlighted call for action to “Get a flu shot” in each poster and banner.

A personal touch on one of the posters featured Raimunda and her mother, which not only draws attention to the importance of adult vaccination but also conveys the family responsibilities of protecting those you love and care about through vaccination.

Figure 3: Poster



Video and radio

Each year the Ministry of Health creates and / or updates videos on a specific YouTube Channel to support the National Influenza Vaccination Campaign and promote awareness among various audiences.¹⁷

In the 2019 campaign, a video was used to educate the general public and at-risk groups about the importance of influenza vaccination.¹⁵ The video stresses the life-threatening impact of influenza on frail people and children, women and older adults through provocative messages such as “influenza can take older people away from their children and grandchildren”.

Moreover, the Ministry also broadcasts ‘a call to action’ on radio to mobilize priority groups to take part in the National Influenza Vaccination Campaign to be vaccinated.

Outdoor advertisement

Messages about the National Influenza Vaccination campaign are visible on buses and subway panels throughout cities and communities.

While calling on those who are eligible for the free flu shot to have the influenza vaccination, the advertisements stress the potentially fatal

consequence with the message “Influenza killed 1,381 Brazilians in 2018”.¹⁵

Figure 4: Outdoor advertisement



Press conference

The Ministry of Health held a press conference on 10th April to kick off the 2019 Campaign and broadcast live through governmental social media including Facebook and Twitter.¹⁸ The Minister of Health, Luiz Henrique Mandetta announced in the press conference that the 2019 campaign aims to vaccinate 58.6 million people including children under the age of six years; pregnant women, puerperal women (women up to 45 days postpartum), older people (from 60 years old), health workers, indigenous peoples, teachers, people with chronic diseases and other clinically determined at-risk groups, socially and economically disadvantaged persons and prison staff, low-income adolescents and young people from 12 to 21 years of age.

Mobilization day

Brazil’s National Influenza Vaccination Campaign is characterized with the promotion of “D-Day” (4th May). In the 2019 D-Day 41,800 mobile vaccination spots and units were set up throughout the country to provide vaccination services to targeted citizens. More than 5.5 million people were vaccinated on D-day at portal vaccination spots.¹⁹

A symbol of the launch of the 2019 D-Day was the illumination of the monument in Rio de Janeiro,

Christ the Redeemer who was dressed in a shirt of vaccination campaign.²⁰

Figure 5: Mobilization Day



News release

Major activities and results of the National Influenza Vaccination Campaign are disseminated through news releases by the Ministry of Health.^{21,22}

During the vaccination phase (18th April – 31st May) of the campaign, news items were sent out regularly to update Brazilians in real-time campaign achievements. By 30th April, 21% of those most at-risk were vaccinated. This figure reached 45% on D-Day, 63% on 1st May, 71.6% on 27th May and 80% by the end of the campaign (31st May).^{23,19,24,25,26}

Following the campaign, news releases continue to reflect the post-campaign activities and vaccination coverage, which reached 90% as of 24th June.⁸ Of note is that even after the campaign ended, the at-risk groups have a further 50 days to access the free vaccination and from 3rd June, the free influenza vaccination is made available to the entire population as long as vaccine stocks last.²⁷

Non-government Organizations

Brazilian Diabetes Society

The Brazilian Society of Diabetes (BSD) has promoted the governmental recommendations of influenza vaccination for people with diabetes.²⁸ Central messages provided to this at-risk group is that the diabetes may be more difficult to control due to influenza and related to more serious complications, such as hyperglycemia.^{29,30}

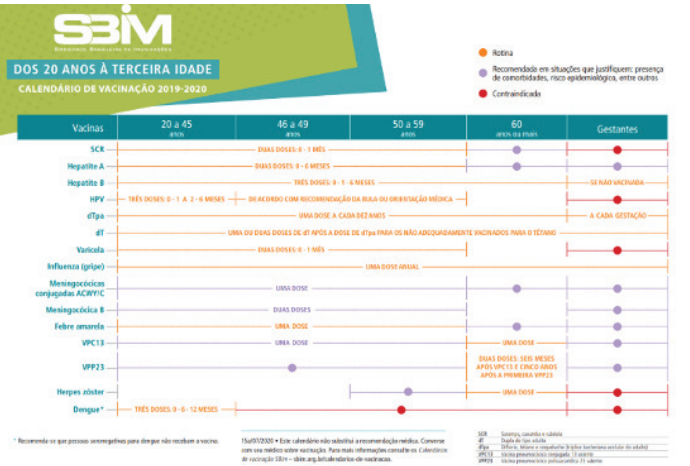
Brazilian Immunization Society

Vaccination calendar and webpage

The Brazilian Immunization Society (SBIM) has produced age-specific vaccination calendars listing all recommended vaccines.

Faced with numerous questions about influenza and vaccination, SBIM has developed a content rich ‘question and answer’ on website space to address public concerns and deliver positive messages about the prevention of influenza through vaccination.³¹ It acts as a repository of information on the importance, safety and effectiveness of vaccines for older adults.³² Nine vaccines considered to protect people aged 60 years and over against various infectious diseases are described in some detail on the site.

Figure 6: Brazilian Immunization Society Vaccination Calendar















Video

Several videos featuring experts and members bring awareness of importance of vaccination in an easy to understand manner.³³ For instance, Dr. Isabella Ballalai, President of SBIM details the benefits of vaccination against vaccine preventable diseases such as influenza and pneumococcal pneumonia and especially encouraging those aged 60 years and over to be vaccinated.

The importance of adult vaccination is also highlighted in a video featuring an older Brazilian, Mr Drauzio Varella, who says that vaccination can save millions of lives and it is necessary for not only children but also adults and seniors.

Status of National Influenza Vaccination Campaign

Comprehensive policies and programs	Influenza vaccination is recommended by government and advisory bodies for at-risk populations including older adults and people with chronic diseases	
	Influenza vaccination is funded under the National Immunization Program (NIP) and administered through the state program for at-risk populations including older adults and people with chronic disease	
Clear communication strategy	Published context-specific communication strategy and action plan which defines communication goals, target audiences, expected roles of partner organizations, communication tools and timeline	
Well-defined audience	Universal message distributed to undifferentiated populations (general audiences regardless of age and underlying health condition)	
	Dedicated and tailored information for specific at-risk audience	
Multiple tools and channels	Online communication such as web content, digital technology, social media, online publications, email	
	Messages are disseminated offline by TV, radio, printout (e.g. leaflet, poster, brochure, outdoor ads)	
	Interactive communication including individual consultation, street campaign and face-to-face mobilization	
Realistic timeline	Timely flu season alert and vaccination reminder	
	National/regional events scheduled for intensive awareness campaign such as national vaccination day/week/month	
Regular updates of information	Information is updated on a regular basis to reflect the most recent evidence and policy, such as recommending newly licensed vaccines for specific recipient	
Engagement and support of civil society	Communication on influenza by patient associations, ageing organizations and advocacy groups	

 Well-developed
  Partially developed
  Not yet developed / No evidence

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