

Messages Matter: A Spotlight on Influenza Vaccination Campaigns

A Ten-country Study to Change the Conversation on Adult Vaccination

[Changing the Conversation on Adult Vaccination](#) is a ground-breaking study conducted by the International Federation on Ageing (IFA) on the status of influenza campaigns focused on the most vulnerable members of our population – older adults and those with underlying chronic conditions.

Today, the IFA is pleased to launch the [summary report](#) which sets the scene for detailed country reports that unpack the campaign content and specificity, and channels used to send public health messages to target populations in ten countries (Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Japan, the South Korea, the United Kingdom, the United States) on the importance of adult influenza vaccination.

Influenza, one of the most common infectious diseases, kills up to 650 000 people every year. Of these deaths, some 90% occur in people aged 65 years and older.¹ While the influenza vaccine is a recommended action, rates of vaccination remains sub-optimal among older adults and those with weaker immune systems. This study showed unequivocally that insufficient attention is paid to implementing effective public health communication on adult influenza vaccination.

Across the ten countries studied one of the most worrying observations is the ‘sameness’ or universality of messages to undifferentiated at-risk populations without consideration of the social determinants of health such as literacy.

While governmental portals serve as important clearinghouses messages are communicated passively and often buried in an avalanche of information. Most countries do not capitalize on the interactive nature of public health messages nor do they address individual information needs to improve vaccination confidence.

Seven essential pillars form the IFA Framework for Effective Adult Vaccination Influenza Campaigns built from evidence gathered and analysed across the ten countries. While these pillars are assembled on the basis of a comprehensive adult influenza vaccination set of policies, an effective communication campaign must be equipped with a clear strategy for a well-defined audience, multiple tools and channels, regular updates of information, a realistic timeline and a strong engagement and support of multiple stakeholders.

The IFA is the first international organization that brings attention to the gaps and good practices in conveying messages that stimulate improved influenza vaccination awareness and uptake rates. We call upon professional, patient and advocacy organizations, together with all levels of government to change the conversation on adult influenza vaccination.

Now is the time to invest in vaccination awareness campaigns that translate messages into action so that no one is left behind.

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¹ World Health Organization (2014) Influenza Fact Sheet No. 211. Retrieved from: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs211/en/>