





Influencing Adult Pneumonia Vaccination Policy

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Background

Currently in France, over 20% of the population is over 60 years old. It is projected that by 2050 over 30% of the population will be aged 65 or older.¹ In 2020, more than 1 in 5 was aged 65 or older.² With an ageing population, there is an increased burden of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). In France, NCDs account for 88% of all deaths, with cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease and diabetes attributable to 26%, 6% and 2% of all deaths, respectively.³ Older people and those with chronic NCDs⁴ represent at-risk groups and are likely to contract vaccine preventable diseases (VPDs), such as influenza, pneumococcal pneumonia and pertussis, due to diminished immune function.⁵

In Europe, pneumococcal pneumonia has the highest mortality rate among vaccine preventable diseases (VPDs) and often results in hospitalization.⁶ Those aged 70 years and over experience the highest incidence of pneumonia in France, followed by those between the ages of 50 and 69 years of age.^{7,8} According to a 2017 study, community-acquired pneumonia (CAP) affects 6.7 out of 1,000 French people aged 65 years and over.⁹ Increasing immunization against vaccine preventable diseases (VPDs) in older adults and at-risk groups is a priority to improve health and well-being at all ages.¹⁰ Vaccination to prevent pneumococcal infection is needed to reduce the incidence of CAP, particularly for older people and other at-risk groups.

In France, pneumococcal vaccination is available to young children, however for those over 2 years old, it is only indicated for specific at-risk groups experiencing chronic disease or immunosuppression.¹¹ In France, the general vaccination calendar does not highlight the need for pneumococcal vaccination for those over 2 years old, despite its recommended use for at-risk adults.¹² The PneuVUE study, which examined adult pneumonia vaccination across nine European countries, found that 93% of adults in France were aware of pneumonia, but only 14% were aware of pneumonia vaccination.¹³ Even more concerning, only 6% of high-risk adults were vaccinated against pneumonia.¹⁴ This data suggests that targeted public health messages and promotion of pneumonia vaccination are lacking in France.

Pneumonia Vaccine Policy in France

In France, the Ministry of Health sets the national health strategy, and implements policy for public health.¹⁴ The regional health agencies are responsible for implementation of health services.¹⁴ Accordingly, the Ministry of Health sets the national immunization programme annually, based on proposals from the Technical Commission on Immunization of the French National Authority for Health (*Haute Autorité de Santé*).¹⁵ The French National Public Health Agency (*Santé publique France*) monitors implementation of the immunization plan and produces campaigns and information for patients and healthcare professionals to encourage vaccination.¹⁵ Health Insurance France (L'Assurance Maladie), responsible for the provision of public health insurance to all French residents,¹⁶ also relays information on vaccination and related costs.¹¹

Pneumococcal vaccination is currently recommended for immunocompromised patients and those with a pre-disposing illness, including chronic respiratory diseases, heart diseases and diabetes. ¹⁷ There are two vaccines available to protect against pneumonia. Those in the aforementioned groups are recommended to receive a dose of each vaccine. ¹⁸ The cost of pneumococcal vaccination is only covered at 65% by the Health Insurance France, with a medical prescription. ¹⁹ In contrast, seasonal influenza vaccination is available for free to any older person over aged 65 years and other at-risk groups. ¹⁹

Government Pneumonia Vaccine Information

Vaccination Calendar

The Ministry of Health annually outlines the vaccination calendar (Figure 1).¹² There are many resources on vaccination developed in collaboration with Public Health France, including simplified posters of the vaccination calendar, flyers, vaccination calendar cards and age or disease-based guides.20

Despite these many resources, pneumococcal vaccination is not outlined in the vaccination calendar for those over the age of 2 years old, despite its recommendation in at-risk groups, 12

Public Health France

Vaccination Info Service

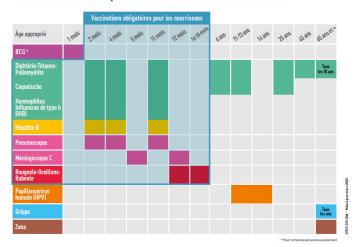
Public Health France produces information and campaigns on vaccination the general public and healthcare professionals.15 This includes the Vaccination Info Service website dedicated to information on vaccination, including information on diseases and their vaccines. vaccination throughout the life course, and current recommended vaccines in France.²¹

A corresponding website exists for the education of health professionals. web page on pneumococcal vaccination includes a description of the associated diseases, who should be vaccinated and why, vaccine effectiveness, reimbursement of vaccines and administration (Figure 2). 23

Due to France's policy on pneumococcal vaccination, there is an emphasis on childhood pneumonia vaccination and adult at-risk groups, suffering from chronic disease.²³ The pages on vaccination for those who are immunosuppressed or people with chronic diseases also include a link to information on pneumococcal vaccination.²⁴ The site provides information on adult vaccination²⁵ and vaccines for those over 65 years old, 26 however Figure 1. Vaccination calendar outlined by the Ministry of Health and Public Health there is only a mention of pneumococcal vaccination.



Calendrier simplifié des vaccinations 2020



Une question? Un conseil? Parlez-en à votre médecin, votre pharmacien, votre sage-femme ou votre infirmier.







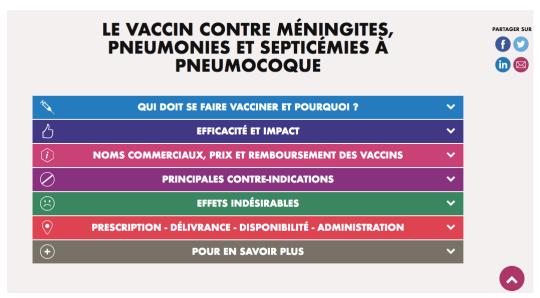


Figure 2. Web page from Vaccination Info Service on pneumococcal vaccination.

Web pages

The Public Health France website has a page dedicated to pneumococcal infection, including information on disease, vaccination, data on vaccination coverage and specific recommendations for at-risk adults.¹⁷

Flyer

A flyer on pneumococcal vaccination for health professionals details characteristics of patients who should receive the vaccine, the two vaccines available and timelines for receiving doses of both vaccines (Figure 3).²⁷



Figure 3. Flyer from Public Health France for health professionals on pneumococcal vaccination.

Health Insurance France

A slideshow on the State Institute of Public Health website explains that vaccination is not only for children but also for the adult population. Also, that the immune system weakens with age, making older people vulnerable to infectious diseases and vaccination can prevent severe disease, such as pneumococcal pneumonia.¹⁶

Web pages

The Health Insurance France website has information on health services and coverage delivered by France's public health system.¹⁶ Vaccination is a highlighted topic and Health Insurance France includes campaigns on general vaccination,²⁸ and specific campaigns on seasonal influenza and measles, mumps and rubella.²⁹ Information on pneumococcal vaccination is included briefly in general vaccination campaigns,¹³ and can also be found on a page dedicated to pneumonia, along with information about the symptoms, diagnosis and treatment.³⁰ Pages dedicated to chronic diseases, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD),³¹ human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), heart failure and liver cirrhosis, also indicate pneumococcal vaccinations recommendations for these groups.



Furthermore, the page "Vaccination: for children and adults too" states that pneumococcal vaccinations are "recommended for all" and reimbursed at 65% of the cost, with a medical prescription.³⁵

High Council of Public Health

Reports

The High Council of Public Health (*Haut Conseil de la santé publique*) contributes to the development, monitoring and evaluation of the National Health Strategy, and provides public health authorities with expertise and advice on public health issues. The most recent recommendations on pneumococcal vaccination were published in 2017.¹⁸ A web page contains links to a report and notice detailing information on both pneumococcal vaccines available, their efficacy, recent literature, international recommendations, economic modelling of vaccination scenarios and final recommendations.¹⁸

Non-Government Pneumonia Vaccine Information

Patient Organizations

Respiratory Health France

Respiratory Health France (Santé Respiratoire France) promotes pneumonia vaccination for atrisk groups with chronic respiratory diseases through their website.^{37,38} In an interview on the management of COPD, Professor Chantal Raherison-Semjen from the respiratory diseases department at the Hospital Center University of Bordeaux (Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Bordeaux) mentions the importance of pneumococcal vaccination for those managing COPD.³⁸ Respiratory Health France also provides a poster on influenza and pneumococcal vaccination for COPD patients.³⁹

The site also features an article interviewing expert Dr. Elodie Blanchard, pulmonologist at Hospital Center University of Bordeaux, who highlights the importance of adult vaccination and specifically, pneumococcal vaccination, for those with chronic respiratory diseases.⁴⁰ The article also calls attention to low vaccination coverage of this population group.

French Federation of Diabetics

The French Federation of Diabetics (*Fédération Française des Diabétiques*) recommends, through their website, pneumococcal vaccination for those with diabetes.⁴¹ There is also a downloadable "practical booklet and a video to make the right decision" regarding vaccination.⁴²

French Association against Myopathies

The French Association against Myopathies (Association Française contre les Myopathies) also features on its website detailed information about on vaccination, which includes pneumococcal vaccination for patients with neuromuscular diseases.⁴³

Professional Organizations

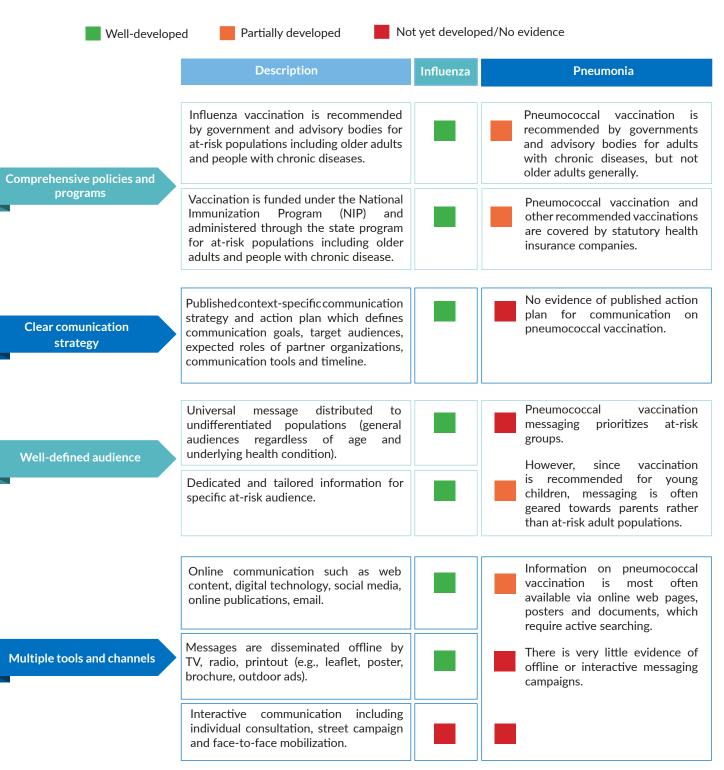
Certain professional organizations include training, working groups and briefings for health professionals on adult vaccination. For example, the French-speaking Society of Infectious Pathology (la Société de Pathologie Infectieuse de langues française) and the French Society of Geriatrics (la Société Française de Gériatrie) provide an online training module for health professionals who want information on diseases and vaccines that affect older people.⁴⁴

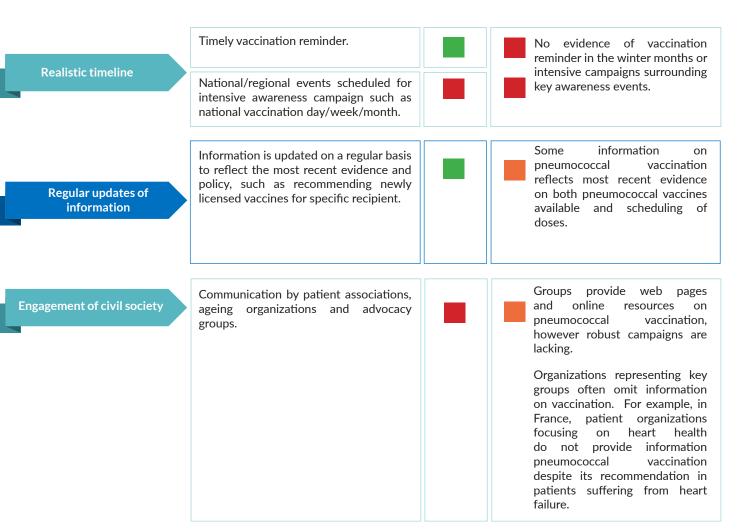


Status of National Pneumonia Vaccination Messaging

Table 1 presents a comparison of pneumonia vaccine scheduling and messaging in France to that of influenza as described in Changing the Conversation on Adult Influenza Vaccination.⁴⁵ Changing the Conversation on Adult Influenza Vaccination identifies seven components of effective adult influenza campaigns⁴⁶ which have been used to evaluate pneumonia vaccination messaging.

Table 1. Status of pneumonia vaccination messaging and comparison to influenza vaccination messaging in France.





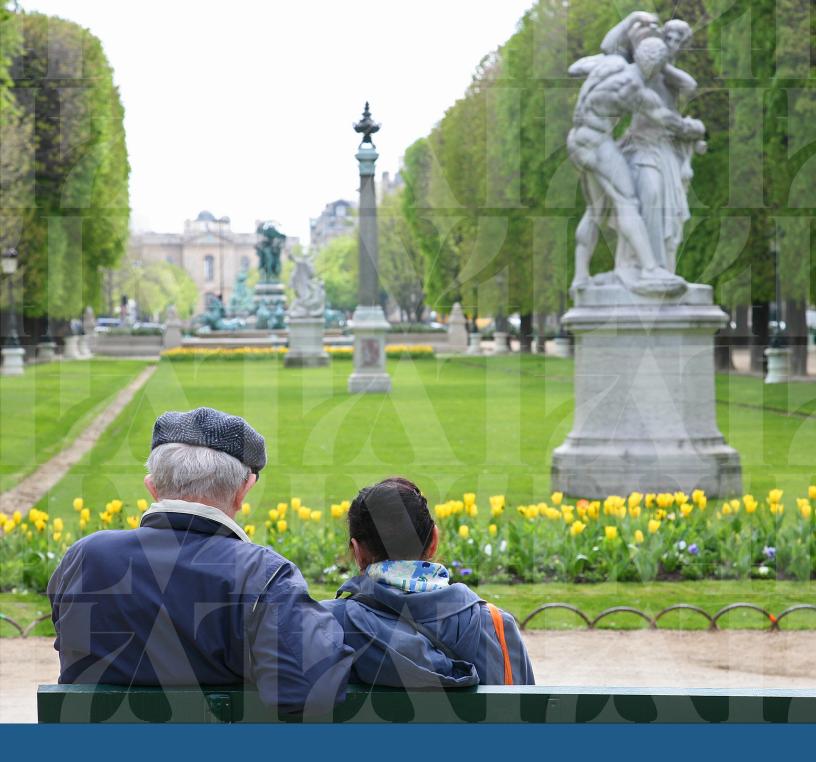
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