Perceptions of Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Counseling and Administration During Dental Visits

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Background

• Children from 6 months to 5 years old are at the highest risk of influenza complications
  • Especially those living in poverty and from racial/ethnic minority groups
• Children don’t always see a primary care provider during influenza season, but some children have routine dental visits during influenza season
• Dentists provide a key opportunity for influenza vaccination
• We have limited information regarding comfort/parental perception on vaccination in the dental home.

Objective

To understand parent’s perceptions of influenza vaccine counseling and administration during routine visits with an oral health provider at a federally qualified health center in Denver, CO.

Methods

• We conducted a cross sectional survey via convenience sampling of parents with children between 18 months and 5 years old.
• We asked all parents with children within the age pool presenting for a dental visit between July 24th, 2023, and August 14th, 2023.
• Surveys were based on the health belief model, with validated questions regarding influenza vaccines, and novel questions probing perceptions of dental visit counseling.
• Data was analyzed descriptively using a Likert Scale.

Results

• The Response Rate was 95% (N= 289/303) and demographics are noted in Table 1.

• Overall, 91.1% of Parents reported feeling “very comfortable” or “somewhat comfortable” discussing influenza infection with their oral health provider.

• 88.1% of Parents reported feeling “very comfortable” or “somewhat comfortable discussing the influenza vaccine with the dentist (Figure 2)

• Half (49.1%) of Parents reported they "strongly agree" or "somewhat agree" that they would trust their child’s dentist to give them an influenza vaccine (Figure 3)

Conclusion

• Most parents are amenable to influenza vaccine and infection counseling during dental visits.
• Half of parents surveyed strongly or somewhat agreed with vaccine delivery during dental visits.
• Future studies should evaluate the impact and feasibility of influenza vaccination during dental visits.
• This should be particularly studied in underserved settings to increase access to the influenza vaccine.