

Offering the Influenza Vaccine in Hand Surgery Clinic Increases Vaccination Rates

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Objectives

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the utility of providing immediate access to the influenza vaccination for patients seen in a pediatric hand surgery clinic. Our research hypothesis was that providing access would increase the rate of vaccination.

Methods

This pilot study was a block randomized, controlled, prospective clinical trial that included all patients seen by a single surgeon, on a single day each week, in a hospital-based pediatric hand surgery practice clinic from October 18, 2016 to March 14, 2017. All patients between 6 months and 18 years of age seen during their initial visit during the study period were included.

Results

Similar proportions of patients in each group had received the vaccine prior to being seen in clinic. In the intervention group, 80 children (67%) had received the vaccine by the end of clinic, compared to 29 (25%) in the control group. Patients that were offered the vaccine had a statistically significant higher vaccination rate. Of the 80 patients in the intervention group that received the vaccine, 47 (59%) received it in the hand clinic (Table 1).

Table 2 compares the intervention group by school-age status. School age children were less likely to be vaccinated prior to their clinic visit compared with younger children. As a group, the older children were more likely to benefit from the intervention.

Table 1 Results by Group

	Control	Intervention
# patients	115	120
Age (mean, range) years	9.8 (.66-17)	10.0 (0.75-17)
Already received	29 (25%)	33 (27%)
Declined		40 (33%)
Received in clinic		47 (39%)
% vaccinated	25%*	67%*

* P < .001

Table 2 Results in Intervention Group by School Age

	Vaccinated prior to clinic	Vaccinated in clinic	Not Vaccinated at End of Clinic	Total Vaccinated at End of Clinic (%)
Pre-School (6 mo. to 4 yr.)	13 (54%)	7 (29%)	4 (17%)	20 (83%)
School (5-17 years)	21 (22%)	40 (49%)	35 (37%)	61 (63%)

Discussion

This pilot project demonstrated that offering the influenza vaccine in a non-traditional setting, an outpatient hand surgery clinic, increased the proportion of patients receiving the vaccine. The greatest utility was in the older age groups, who may have not otherwise seen a medical provider during the influenza season. Unlike adults, most children receive their influenza vaccine at a health care visit, typically at their primary care provider’s office, and less commonly at a medical subspecialty office. Of those vaccinated, about 65% receive the vaccine at the doctor’s office and about 18% at a clinic/health center. Less than 5% receive the vaccine at emergency departments, pharmacies, or schools.

Conclusion

This pilot project demonstrated that offering the influenza vaccine in a non-traditional setting, an outpatient hand surgery clinic, increased the proportion of patients receiving the vaccine.

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