

Improving immunization rates among seniors in a rural family practice clinic

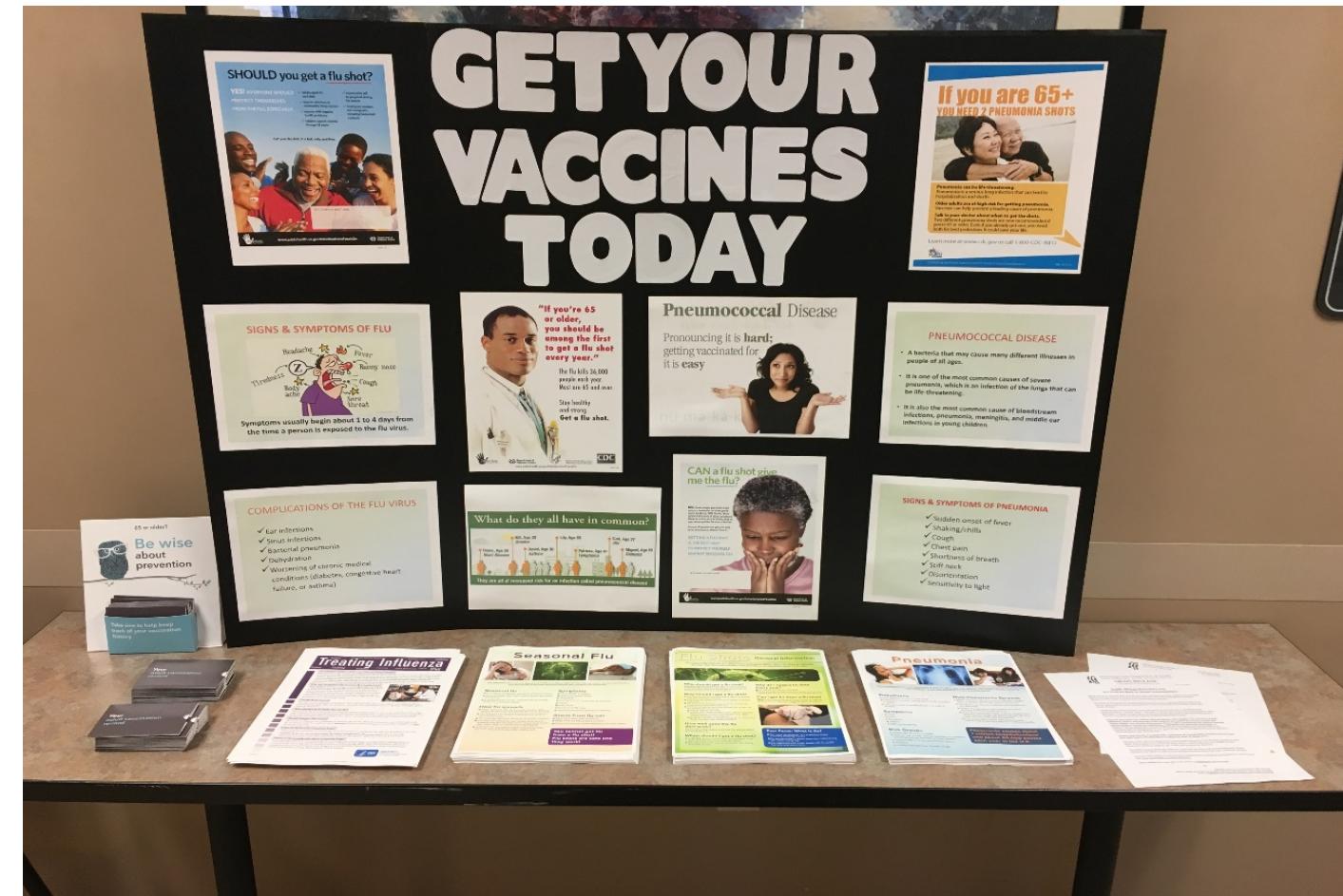
Emily B. Landrum, MD, James L. Taylor, PharmD

Background

- Healthy People 2020 project has a goal to achieve influenza and pneumococcal vaccination rates of 90% in adults 65 years and older.
- Improving vaccination rates reduces community disease burden and loss of productivity in most communities.
- Immunization rates for influenza and pneumococcus vary in patients 65 and older. Many patients simply do not understand the importance of these vaccines. Multiple strategies were implemented to aide in increasing these vaccination rates during the 2016-2017 flu season.

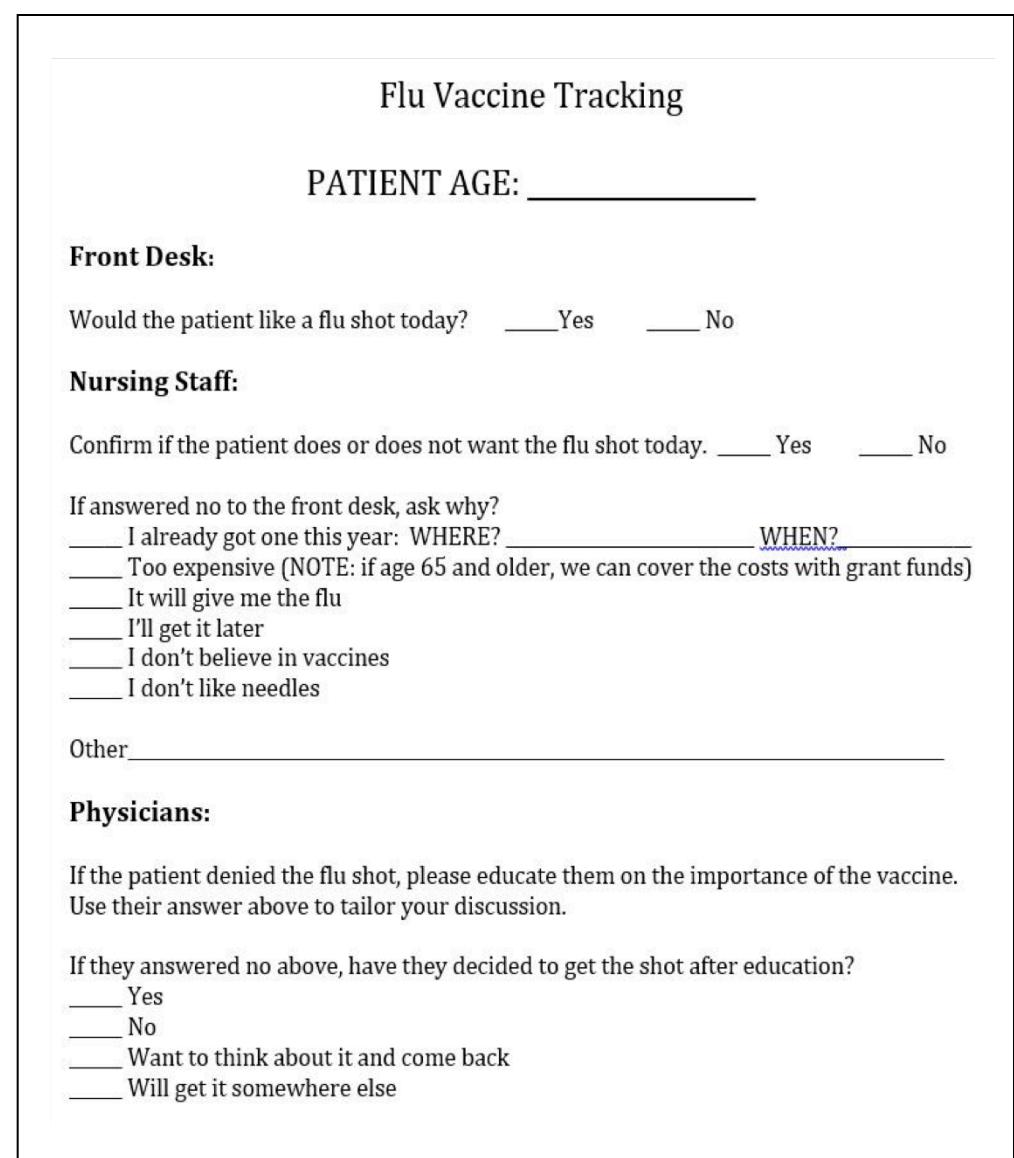
Objectives

- Vaccinate 75% of seniors against influenza and 80% against pneumococcus.
- Increase vaccine health literacy.
- Improve influenza and pneumococcal vaccine awareness among health providers.



Methods

- NMMC IRB Approval granted August 1, 2016.
- Deidentified data was collected via our EMR to determine vaccination rates for the senior population at baseline and then monthly.
- Physicians and staff were educated on vaccine importance prior to the influenza season and then reminded monthly throughout the season.
- Educational handouts, exam room screensavers, waiting room television advertisements, and vaccine postcards were employed for vaccine awareness.
- EMR reminders for pneumococcal eligibility were sent by pharmacist to providers on appointment day.



Flu Vaccine Tracking

PATIENT AGE: _____

Front Desk:

Would the patient like a flu shot today? _____ Yes _____ No

Nursing Staff:

Confirm if the patient does or does not want the flu shot today. _____ Yes _____ No

If answered no to the front desk, ask why:
 _____ I already got one this year: WHERE? _____ WHEN?
 _____ Too expensive (NOTE: if age 65 and older, we can cover the costs with grant funds)
 _____ It will give me the flu
 _____ I'll get it later
 _____ I don't believe in vaccines
 _____ I don't like needles
 Other _____

Physicians:

If the patient denied the flu shot, please educate them on the importance of the vaccine. Use their answer above to tailor your discussion.

If they answered no above, have they decided to get the shot after education?
 _____ Yes
 _____ No
 _____ Want to think about it and come back
 _____ Will get it somewhere else

- Flu vaccine tracking forms were created and used at each step of a patient encounter.
- Tracking form information prompted nurses and physicians to provide vaccine education to each patient.

Results

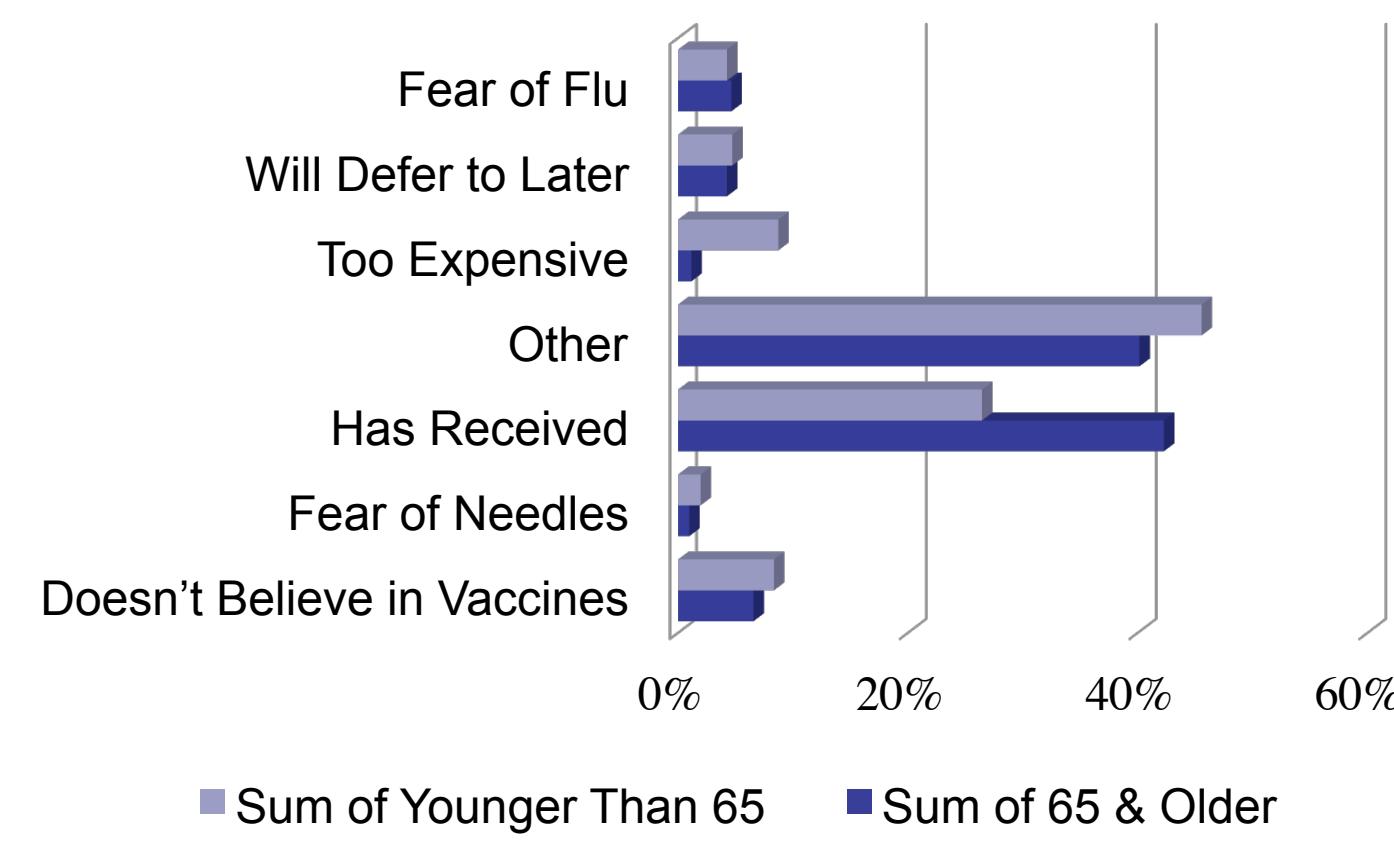
- Total vaccination rates were 69.23% for influenza and 73.59% for pneumococcus, both below our goals set prior to influenza season.
- Both influenza and pneumococcal vaccination rates were improved from the previous seasons.

Overall vaccination rates

	2015-2016	2016-2017	Difference
Influenza	52.45%	69.3 %	+ 16.8%
Pneumococcal 23	61.4%	58.46 %	- 2.94%
Prevnr 13	31.33 %	59.42 %	+ 28%
Total Pneumococcal	66.95%	73.59%	+6.64%

- The influenza vaccine rate administered at this clinic was 18%.
- The most common reasons for declining influenza vaccine were: already vaccinated (44.45%); other (15.24%); too expensive (11.35%); don't believe in vaccines (10.82%).
- Physician education resulted in vaccination being given during 4.68% of encounters.

Reasons for refusal of influenza vaccine



Conclusions

- Within our practice immunization rates for influenza and pneumococcus remain below nationally established goals.
- Many barriers contribute to poor vaccination rates; however, targeted educational strategies can be implemented to improve patient understanding of the importance of vaccines.
- Physicians must take responsibility in counseling their patients on this topic.
- Continued efforts targeted at increasing vaccination rates and examining barriers to vaccination in the senior population and others should be implemented in the future.

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