

Abstract

Knowledge Matters: Evaluating a College Flu Vaccination Campaign

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Background: Annual flu shot rates are low, especially among young, health college students. Many misconceptions exist about the safety, efficacy and community benefits from high vaccination uptake. A commemoration of the 1918 Flu Pandemic sponsored engaging events addressing knowledge and vaccination. This project describes outcomes of these activities on vaccine uptake. **Methods:** A cross sectional online survey was distributed via campus-wide email prior to (N=296) and after (N=319) events. **Results:** At post-test, faculty were more likely to report having the flu shot compared to students and staff (62.5%, 50.7%, 40.9%). Faculty reported the lowest likelihood of getting a flu shot (6.9%, 79.3%, 13.8%). Respondents correctly answering 5+ knowledge questions were most likely to get vaccinated compared to those answering 4 or less (83%, 17%). Increased knowledge strongly predicted getting vaccinated in both bi- and multi-variate models. Student health reported administering 26% more flu shots this year compared to last ($n=371$, v. $n= 266$). **Discussion:** Fun events such as an Escape Room, Pandemic game competitions and student flu shot ambassadors can improve knowledge and vaccination; however, reported overall rates (51.1%) remained lower than optimal for herd immunity. Faculty and staff vaccination rates are rarely reported so comparisons are difficult. However, these results indicate faculty may be amenable to knowledge interventions promoting vaccination. Future research should explore the impact of event engagement and ways to further increase vaccination rates. New techniques are needed to easily document actual vaccine status. **Conclusion:** Community-wide vaccination campaigns may boost vaccination rates through knowledge-based, engaging activities.

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