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Immunisation coverage in healthcare personnel in Argentina: results from a national online survey

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Objectives: Immunization of health care personnel (HCP) aims to prevent occupationally acquired infections and avoid transmission to patients. The National Programme for Control of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases (ProNaCEI) in Argentine recommends and provides free vaccination for HCP. Knowledge of coverage is essential to assess program outcomes and develop strategies for improvement. Our objective is to evaluate rates of vaccination coverage in Argentinian HCP .

Methods: Between May and July 2013, we conducted an internet survey. HCP were recruited through e-mails to ProNaCEI, health care settings and scientific societies. Survey items included: occupation type, occupational setting, contact with neonates and infants, routinely exposition to isolates of *N. meningitidis* , self -reported vaccination of: Hepatitis B (HB) , influenza (I) , and diphtheria -tetanus (dT) (vaccines recommended in Argentina for all the HCP) and diphtheria- tetanus - pertussis acellular (dTpa) and meningococcal conjugate ACYW (MCV) , vaccines provided for those attending neonates and infants and microbiologists, respectively . The SurveyMonkey ® platform was used. Statistical analysis was done using Microsoft Excel ® 2010.

Results: We received 1638 responses from 940 physicians (872 clinicians, 68 surgeons), 345 nurses, 55 laboratory personnel , 98 technicians, 54 housekeeping and maintenance personnel and 146 unspecified. 80 % worked in public health care settings, 12% in private clinics and 8% in private offices; 86 % referred working in occupational settings with vaccination requirements and offering vaccination on-site. Overall coverage for HB was 90 % , I 80 % , dT 72 % . Vaccination coverage in clinicians was: HB 88% , I 80 % , 66 % dT , surgeons: HB 98 % , I 64 % , 63 % dT , nurses: HB 92 % , I 86 % 83 % dT , laboratory personnel: HB 93 % , I 83 % , 52 % dT , housekeeping and maintenance personnel: HB 100 % , I 95 % , dT 89.5 % . For HCP in contact with neonates and infants, dTpa coverage was 65% and for microbiologists MCV 15%. Leading reasons for not being vaccinated were: ignore the requirement (HB : 47% , I 72 % , dT 57 % dTpa 56% , MCV 57%) and not being offered vaccination (HB . 38 % , I 14 % , 37 % dT , dTpa 36 % , MCV 39 %) There was no difference in coverage between HCP from public and private occupational settings.

Conclusions: Coverages were good for HB and I, especially in housekeeping and maintenance personnel, and low for dTpa and MCV. Similar values were observed between HCP from public and private occupational settings. The most common reasons for not being vaccinated were ignoring the recommendation and not being offered the vaccine.