



香港醫學會
The Hong Kong Medical Association

FOUNDED IN 1920•INCORPORATED IN 1960 AS A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE
MEMBER OF WORLD MEDICAL ASSOCIATION AND CONFEDERATION OF MEDICAL ASSOCIATIONS IN ASIA & OCEANIA

5th Floor, Duke of Windsor Social Service Building, 15 Hennessy Road, Hong Kong
Tel: (852) 2527 8285 (6 lines) Fax: (852) 2865 0943 E-mail: hkma@hkma.org Website: www.hkma.org
香港軒尼詩道十五號溫莎公爵社會服務大廈五樓

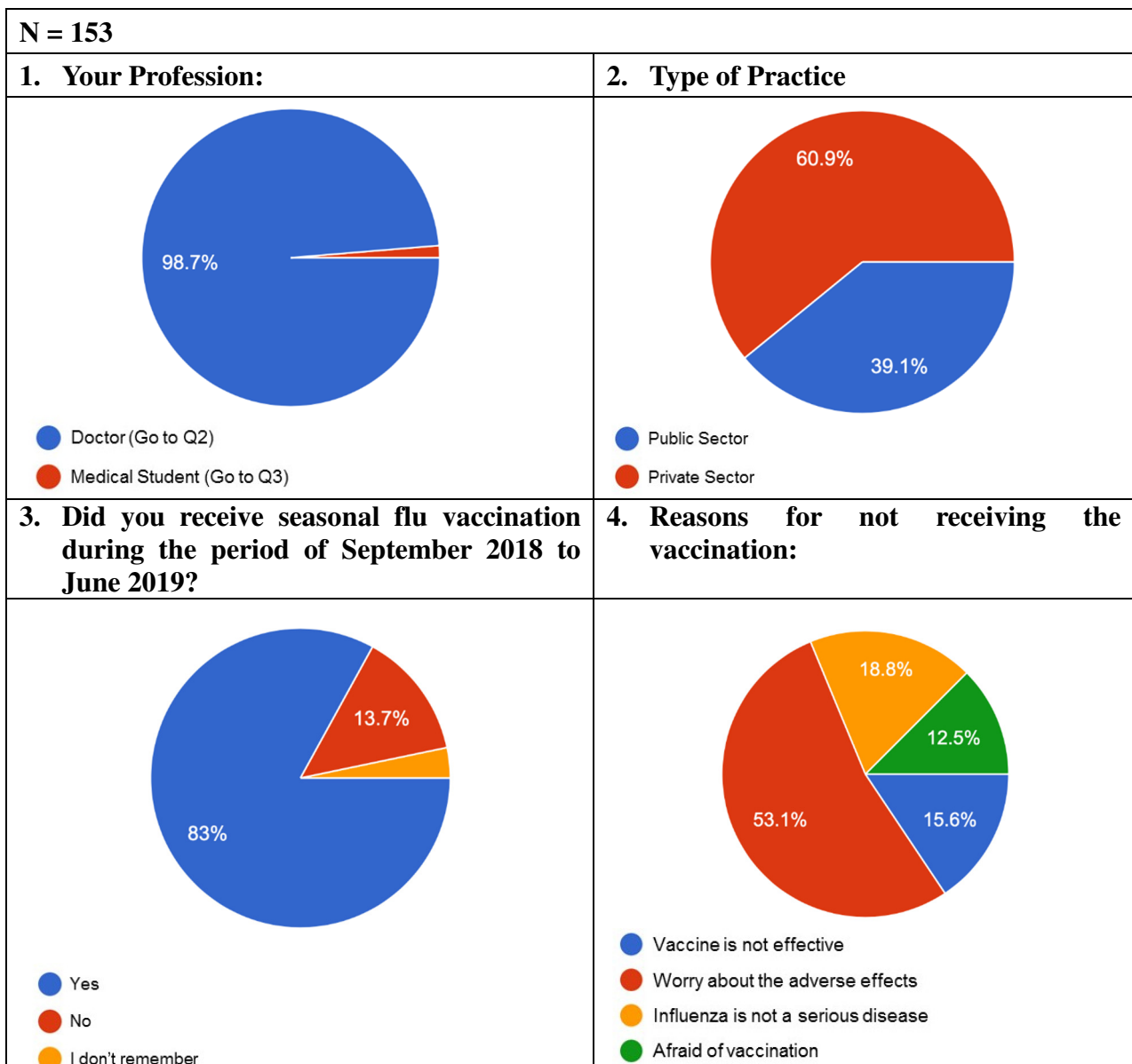
Press Release

26 October 2019

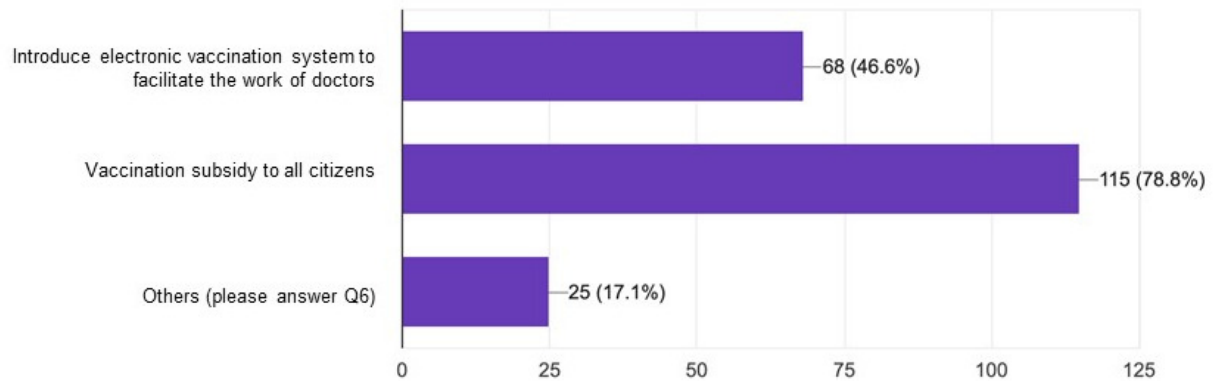
Fight the Flu. It Starts with You!

The overall influenza vaccination uptake rate in Hong Kong is about 15%, while among the healthcare workers in hospitals, the uptake rate is approximately 27%. When comparing to Taiwan's over 60% and United Kingdom's over 70% uptake rate, the rate of Hong Kong is relatively on the low side.

In view of this, the Hong Kong Medical Association (HKMA) and the Hong Kong Elderly Welfare Foundation Limited – Vaccine Academy has conducted a survey to investigate seasonal influenza vaccination of medical professionals. The HKMA sent out the online survey to members, including doctors and medical students, to collect their views in early October. The results is shown below:



5. What measures the Government should include to fight against influenza epidemic? (multiple answers)



6. Suggestions based on those answered "Others" in Q5 (N = 25):

Increase the Uptake Rate

- Offer vaccination coupons to the public
- Expand vaccination subsidy groups: full-time students, teachers & healthcare workers
- Compulsory vaccination to healthcare professionals and staff working in elderly homes
- Increase the subsidy amount

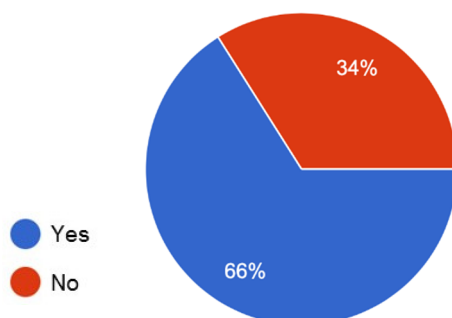
Public Education

- Encourage the citizens to put on surgical masks during peak flu season
- Promote the importance of disease prevention and enhance the awareness of the public on public health

Other Suggestions

- Reduce the administrative works of participating doctors in the "Vaccination Subsidy Scheme"
- Improve the overcrowded conditions in public transportations

7. Do you notice that influenza vaccination can reduce CV events for CVD patients?





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The HKMA organized a press conference this afternoon and provided on-site influenza vaccination service for doctors and nurses. Healthcare professionals are critical gatekeepers in protecting the health of the public. By protecting themselves with influenza vaccine, healthcare professionals reduce the risk of spreading influenza to patients and of disruption to their care services, which is particularly important in influenza surge, when pressures on frontline healthcare services are severe.

In the study of FLUVACS¹, the 1-year mortality rate among CVD patients with influenza vaccination was 2% compared with those without vaccination who hit 8%. The American Heart Association also put influenza vaccination as top grade 1A and recommends it to CVD patients². The recent data from Taiwan further proved that influenza vaccination is effective to Chinese CVD patients who are aged 65 or above and reduce their mortality and recurrent heart attack³. Hence, cardiologist suggested CVD patients should consider to get vaccinated for self-protection.

The Government included adults aged 50 – 64 for fee subsidy under the Vaccination Subsidy Scheme last year. However, according to the record from the Department of Health, only 1/10 of the target group, about 180,000 got vaccinated. This is far below the expectation and not enough on lowering the community epidemic risk. The Government should put much more effort in educating the public, and encouraging more employers to offer vaccination access to their employees, so as to boost the uptake rate among this target group for cutting down economic loss due to absence from work.

The HKMA would like to urge the public, except those who should not take vaccine for medical grounds, to get vaccination as soon as possible. In addition to receiving influenza vaccination, people should pay extra attention to personal hygiene - maintaining good indoor ventilation; washing hands after touching the mouth, nose and eyes; putting on a surgical mask when having respiratory symptoms. Nonetheless, the public should seek professional advice from their family doctors on influenza vaccination to get the protection for them and their loved ones.

References:

1. Flu vaccination in acute coronary syndromes and planned percutaneous coronary interventions (FLUVACS) Study (2004)
2. Influenza vaccination as secondary prevention for cardiovascular disease (2006)
3. Influenza vaccination and secondary prevention of cardiovascular disease among Taiwanese elders - A propensity score-matched follow-up study (2019)

Notes to editors:

The Hong Kong Medical Association, founded in 1920, aims to bring together Hong Kong's government, institutional, university and private medical practitioners for an effective exchange of views and co-ordination of efforts. The foremost objective of the Association is to safeguard and promote public health. The Association speaks collectively for its members and aims to keep its members abreast of medical ethics, issues and advances around the world. In fulfilling these goals, the association hopes to better serve the people of Hong Kong.

Enquiries : Candice TONG Tel : 2527 8285
Home Page : www.hkma.org Email : hkma@hkma.org