CORRESPONDENCE

Influenza Vaccination Coverage in the 2004/05, 2005/06, and 2006/07 Seasons: A Secondary Data Analysis Based on Billing Data of the German Associations of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians

by Dipl.-Ing. Annicka M. Reuss, Dipl.-oec. troph. Dietmar Walter, Dipl.-Inf. Marcel Feig, Dipl.-Inf. Lutz Kappelmayer, Dr. med. Udo Buchholz, Dr. med. Tim Eckmanns, PD Dr. med. vet. Gabriele Poggensee in volume 48/2010

Understandable Skepticism

The authors in their article provide data on influenza vaccination rates from 2004/05 to 2006/07; they compared these rates between federal states for most of Germany and with some EU countries. They found that Germany has a lower vaccination rate than several neighboring countries and advocate a vaccination rate of 75% in the population of people aged 60 years or older, citing information from Germany's Standing Committee on Vaccination and the World Health Organization.

They state that only half of participating doctors had advised their patients in favor of having the vaccine.

In view of this it is surprising that the question of what caused this lack of willingness to recommend vaccination was not asked.

Insufficient information is not likely to be the cause. In my opinion, the problem is one of acceptance. After the costly dilemma with the dreaded swine flu pandemic and the stockpiling of the vaccine, skepticism among colleagues and patients is all too understandable, even towards recommendations from the WHO and the Standing Committee on Vaccination. Similarly, skepticism is also directed against the pharmaceutical industry, which of course makes excellent profits out of these vaccines.

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Conflict of interest statement

The author declares that no conflict of interest exists.

The authors of the article have chosen not to publish a reply.