

Influenza Vaccine Offered to Homeless Patients in a Central London Emergency Department

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Aims

- ▶ To offer all patients in our emergency department registering as 'no fixed abode' (NFA) the influenza vaccine between the winter months of November and February
- ▶ To see if this was a feasible health intervention that could be carried out in our emergency department
- ▶ To ascertain what challenges may occur and how we can overcome these in order to make this a sustainable health intervention

St Thomas' Emergency Department

- St Thomas' hospital is a teaching hospital situated in central London
- We see over 175,000 attendances per year¹
- On Average 450-550 patients every 24 hours
- So we are busy!



St Thomas' Hospital

- ▶ Situated in Lambeth borough and next door to Westminster borough
- ▶ Estimated rough sleepers² on a single autumn night in 2019 in:
 - Lambeth: 43
 - Westminster: 333
- ▶ Number of rough sleeper patients seen annually in our emergency department¹:
 - 2018: 753
 - 2019: 717

Homeless Health Care at St Thomas'

- ▶ Inpatient homeless health team
- ▶ Homeless health boxes¹ in the emergency department:
 - Safe discharge checklist for homeless patients
 - Homeless information by borough
 - Maps to homeless day centres
 - Maps to specialist homeless GP surgeries
 - Local rough sleepers' magazine ('The Pavement')

So Why Offer the Influenza Vaccine to Homeless Patients?

- Homeless people are at increased risk of dying from:
 - HIV
 - Hepatitis
 - Chronic lower respiratory diseases
 - Alcohol-related disease³
- Both the World Health Organisation and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control identify:
 - All persons with chronic medical conditions as an at-risk group for developing severe disease if they contract influenza
 - Recommends influenza vaccination each year for this group^{4,5}



Flu vaccination: increasing uptake

Expert testimony

NICE guideline NG103

Expert paper 3: homeless outreach

22 August 2018

Final

*Developed by Public Health – Internal
Guideline Development team*

Initial Considerations

Costs⁷:

- Quadrivalent: £8.00
- Trivalent: £9.79

- ▶ What if patient's accidentally receive two doses over the winter period?

- ▶ More paper work for doctors and nurses to fill out

Methods

- ▶ Influenza vaccine offered to all homeless patients attending St Thomas' emergency department between:
 - November 2018 & February 2019
 - November 2019 and February 2020
- ▶ The top 18 most frequent attenders registered as NFA were identified from 392 frequent attenders
- ▶ An electronic 'alert' was placed on these patients as a reminder to doctors to offer an influenza vaccine

A paper flow chart was developed to assist doctors in offering the flu vaccine

Flu Vaccination for Homeless Patients attending ED- WINTER 2018/19

Patient Name:
Hospital No:
DOB:
Or Patient sticker

1. Is the patient homeless? Yes

2. Flu vaccine received 2018/9?

No (→Q3)

Yes (Document in notes. No further action required)

3. Do they have any contra-indication to the flu vaccine?

Current acute infection or febrile illness?	Yes/No
Previous anaphylactic reaction to flu vaccine?	Yes/No
Allergic to hens' eggs or chicken products?	Yes/No
Hypersensitive to: neomycin, formaldehyde, sodium chloride, potassium chloride, potassium phosphate dibydrate, potassium dihydrogen phosphate?	Yes/No
Unusual reaction to other vaccines in the past?	Yes/No
On regular phenytoin, theophylline or theophylline?	Yes/No
Diagnosed bleeding disorder or bruise easily?	Yes/No
BCG in past 3 months?	Yes/No
Currently pregnant or breast feeding?	Yes/No

No contraindications to flu vaccine

Offer flu vaccination: Accepted Declined

4. Patient < 65 years old?

- Prescribe: Quadrivalent Influenza Vaccine (available in ED)
- Dose: 0.5ml
- Route: IM
- Ensure batch number, expiry date and injection site are documented

5. Is the patient > 65 years?

- Prescribe: Trivalent Influenza Vaccine (order from pharmacy)
- Dose: 0.5ml
- Route: IM
- Ensure batch number, expiry date and injection site are documented

All patients:

- Provide information leaflet. Trivalent Influenza Vaccine (order from pharmacy),
- Scan flow chart to symphony with patient's notes.
- Please place a patient sticker in the yellow book in the Major's omnicell room.
- Inform GP flu vaccine ADMINS

Results: winter 2018-2019

- ▶ 344 patients registered as NFA between Nov 2018 & Feb 2019
- ▶ 13 homeless patients were successfully vaccinated
- ▶ Vaccinating 3.8% of NFA attendances
- ▶ Out of the 18 frequent attenders identified, 6 patients attended the department during this period
- ▶ However, none of these 6 patients received the vaccine

Key 3- Influenza Vaccination for homeless patients.

Why?

In 2017, 597 homeless people died in England & Wales⁸ with the average age of death for a homeless male being 47 years and 43 years for a homeless female.^{3,9}

What?

Homeless people are at increased risk of influenza and predisposed to severe complications due to high rates of chronic disease. NICE recommends influenza vaccination in this underserved group of patients.⁶ Between 2017-2018, 31,924 homeless patients attended Emergency Departments across England,⁹ the Emergency Department therefore provides an innovative opportunity to offer relevant vaccinations in this hard to reach population.

How?

- Offer flu vaccination to all patients registering as NFA.
- Check for prior vaccination this winter.
- Use flow chart (found with record log book on top of resus fridge) to guide you through contra-indications and prescribing.
- Place a patient sticker in the homeless flu vaccination record log book.
- Put flow chart in with the patient's notes.
- Inform GP in discharge letter.
- (NB: homeless flu vaccination store in resus fridge, staff vaccination store in majors fridge).

Flu Vaccination for Homeless Patients attending ED- WINTER 2019/20

Patient Name: _____
Hospital No: _____
DOB: _____
Or Patient sticker

1. Is the patient homeless? Yes

2. Flu vaccine received 2018/9**
No (→Q3)
Yes (Document in notes. No further action required)

3. Do they have any contra-indication to the flu vaccine?
 (+)

Current acute infection or feeling feverish?	Yes/No
Previous untoward reaction to flu vaccine?	Yes/No
Allergic to hens' eggs or chicken products?	Yes/No
Hypersensitive to: neomycin, formaldehyde, octinoxal-9, sodium chloride, potassium chloride, disodium phosphate dihydrate, potassium dihydrogen phosphate?	Yes/No
Untoward reaction to other vaccines in the past?	Yes/No
On regular phenytoin, theophylline or Warfarin?	Yes/No
Diagnosed bleeding disorder or bruise easily?	Yes/No
RIG in past 3 months?	Yes/No
Currently pregnant or breast feeding?	Yes/No

No contraindications to flu vaccine

Offer flu vaccination: Accepted Declined

4. Patient < 65 years old?

- > Prescribe: **Quadrivalent** Influenza Vaccine (available in ED)
- > Dose: 0.5ml
- > Route: IM
- > Ensure batch number, expiry date and injection site are documented

5. Is the patient > 65 years?

- > Prescribe: Trivalent Influenza Vaccine (available in ED)
- > Dose: 0.5ml
- > Route: IM
- > Ensure batch number, expiry date and injection site are documented

All patients:

- > Provide information leaflet
- > Scan this flow chart
- > Please place a patient sticker in the record log book
- > Inform GP flu vaccination

* Ask the patient - please check Symp

** Patient information leaflets can be found in the resus fridge

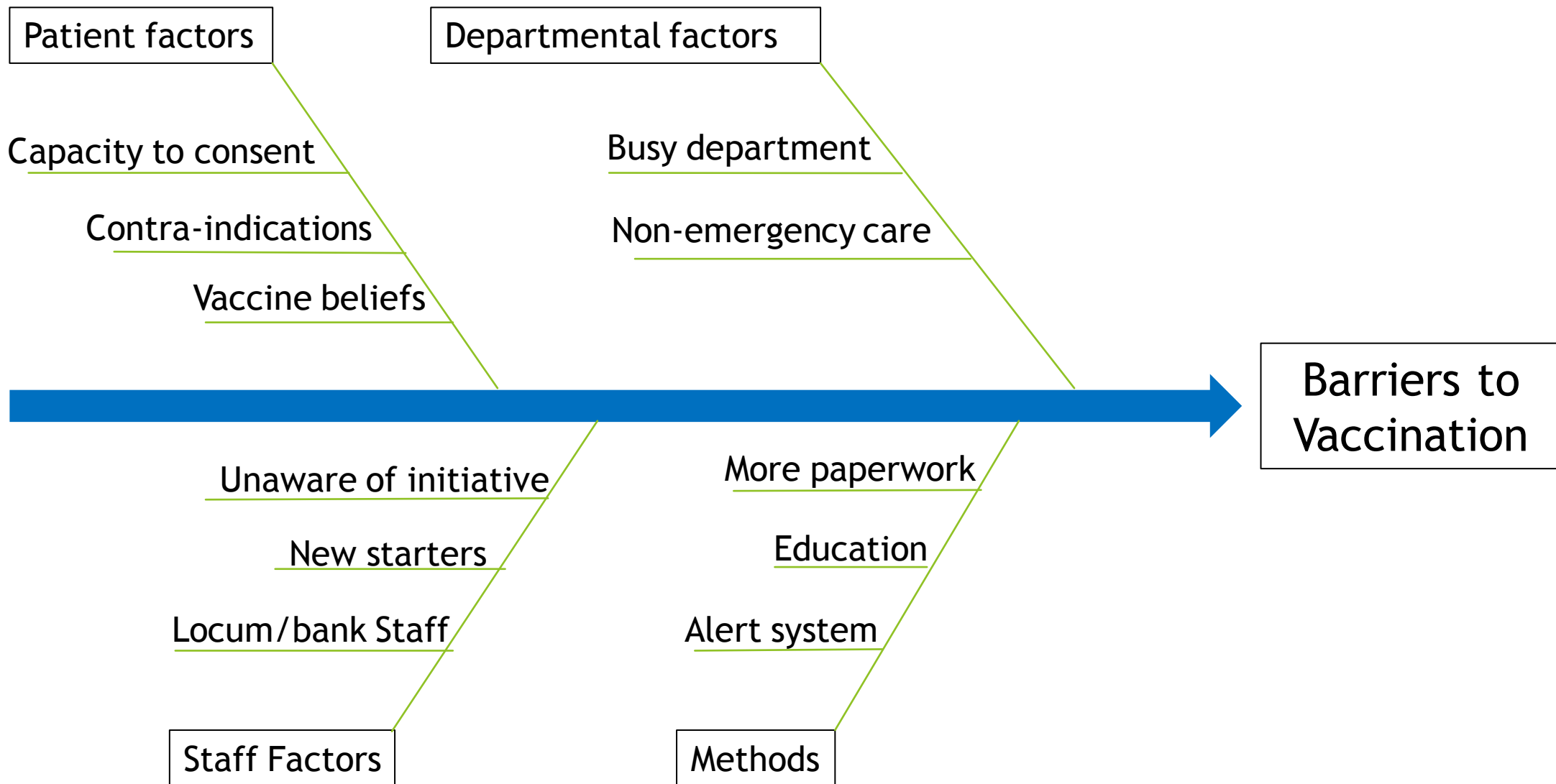
Homeless Flu Vaccination Record Log

Please put:

- **Patient sticker** (or name & hospital number)
- **Date and signature** for all homeless patients given a flu vaccination
- Please ensure that only the labelled box of flu vaccination is used for this purpose
- The homeless flu vaccination is stored in the Resus fridge (peer vaccinator flu vaccine stock should be stored in the majors drugs fridge)

Results: winter 2019-2020

- ▶ 331 patient's registered as NFA between the months of November 2019 & February 2020
- ▶ 14 patient's vaccinated
- ▶ Vaccinating 4.2% of NFA attenders



Staff Survey

- ▶ 70% staff surveyed were aware of the initiative
- ▶ 20% staff surveyed had offered a homeless patient a flu vaccine
- ▶ 100% of staff said they did not see it as a burden of another form to fill out
- ▶ 75% of staff said they saw homelessness as a medical issue
- ▶ Out of the staff who had offered a patient flu vaccine:
 - 100% said it was an easy process
 - 100% said it wasn't time consuming

“Homeless people are less likely to attend a GP clinic/have less access to healthcare”

“Less likely to engage with primary care/other healthcare providers- good opportunity to offer in ED.”

“More susceptible patients, often have no GP, so opportunistic vaccination seems sensible.”

“Good preventative strategy.”

“Prevent morbidity & mortality, often not linked in with primary services, so may not have another opportunity.”

“Poor access to healthcare and vulnerable patients.”

Looking Forward & Recommendations

- ▶ Challenges identified
- ▶ Certain factors unable to change
- ▶ Ways to overcome these
 - ▶ Remind staff more regularly
 - ▶ Email reminders for staff
 - ▶ Discuss at induction for new rotations
 - ▶ Posters in the Emergency department
 - ▶ Education little and often
 - ▶ Offer it on arrival
 - ▶ Make it part of the triage process
 - ▶ Alert on symphony for all NFA patients
 - ▶ Leaflets to be offered to homeless patients

Conclusion

- ▶ Between 2017-2018, **31,924** homeless patients attended Emergency Departments across England⁹
- ▶ The Emergency Department therefore provides an innovative opportunity to offer relevant vaccinations in this hard to reach population
- ▶ Despite low numbers, the vaccination of patients over two winters demonstrates that this is a feasible health intervention in the Emergency Department
- ▶ Easy to replicate in other emergency departments
- ▶ Raising awareness among staff about our homeless health population and their specific needs
- ▶ Minimal costs involved
- ▶ Good addition to other homeless interventions available in our emergency department

References

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