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Immunization of HCWs against influenza is a patient safety and quality-of-care issue. In Ireland, there are potentially 1,000 flu related deaths during a severe flu season attributed to influenza. Healthcare Institutions that have a high influenza vaccination rate amongst HCWs show a benefit in patients' all-cause mortality.¹

HSE recommends that all HCWs receive the seasonal influenza vaccination each year, with the recommended National uptake of 40%². Overall uptake of Influenza Vaccine among HCWs in Saolta University Health Care Group, 2015-2016 Influenza season, was 16.1%. Achieving a high uptake of influenza vaccination among HCWs can reduce the risk of influenza transmission between patients and HCWs, thus protecting themselves and their patients from influenza.

Method

To assist in the development of a successful programme, we reviewed studies where interventions aimed to increase the uptake of influenza vaccination among hospital HCWs. The following elements were used in intervention programmes that increased vaccine uptake³: provision of free vaccine, easy access to the vaccine (e.g. through peer vaccinators and occupational health clinics), knowledge and behaviour modification through educational sessions, communication strategies and incentives. Finally, management or organizational changes, such as the assignment of personnel dedicated to the intervention programme were utilized to increase the uptake of vaccine in HCWs. Each hospital within the Saolta Group were asked to implement the above outlined strategies to increase the uptake of influenza vaccine in HCWs. The

number of these components applied in each hospital appeared to be proportional to the increase in uptake.

Results

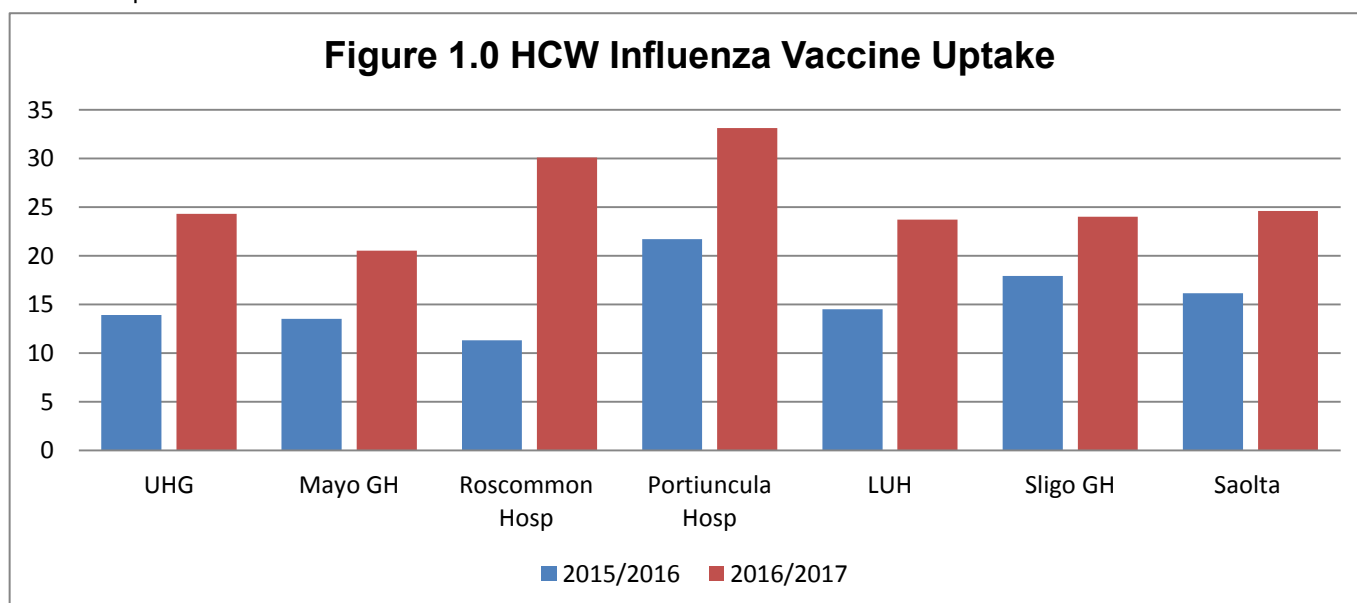
Figure 1.0 HCW Influenza Vaccine % Uptake by Hospital, Saolta Hospital Group, 2015-2016, 2016-2017 Influenza season – table below

Conclusion

The proportion of staff vaccinated in the Saolta University Health Care Group following this campaign was higher than had previously been achieved. Though successful in achieving improved vaccination uptake, no hospital in the group achieved the recommended 40% target for HCWs. If influenza uptake in hospital HCW is to be increased on sustained basis, hospital managers need to be committed to conduct a well-designed long-term intervention programme that includes a variety of co-ordinated managerial and organizational elements.

References

1. Tailoring Immunisation Programme for Seasonal Influenza (TIP FLU). A guide for increasing health care workers' uptake of seasonal influenza vaccination. WHO Europe, 2015.
2. <http://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunisation/hcpinfo/guidelines/chapter11.pdf>
3. Hollmeyer, H., Hayden, F. (2012). Review: interventions to increase influenza vaccination among healthcare workers in hospitals. *Influenza Other Respir Viruses*: 7(4):604-21.



*The 2016/2017 Data are based on provisional figures February 2017