

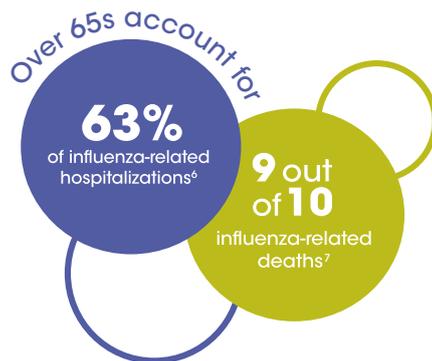
Protecting older people against the risks of influenza


SANOFI PASTEUR


International
Longevity Centre UK

Over 65s are at greater risk of serious influenza complications

They can experience a decline in their physical functioning and quality of life.^{1,2} They are also at greater risk of serious complications, such as pneumonia, heart attack and stroke.^{3,4,5}



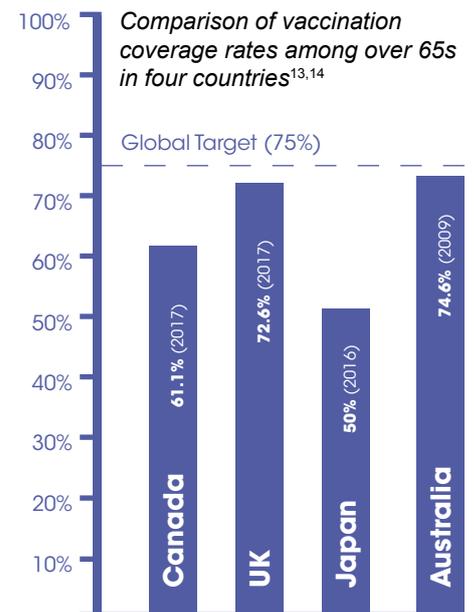
Annual vaccination is the most effective way to prevent influenza infection and its complications - but vaccination targets are not being met

Public health bodies advise older adults to get vaccinated against influenza every year^{8,9} and the World Health Organization (WHO) has declared influenza vaccination as a priority intervention to achieve healthy ageing in Europe.¹⁰ Despite that, **influenza vaccination coverage remains under the global target of 75% set by the WHO for people aged 65 and more.**¹¹ Influenza vaccination coverage in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries is at an average of 43%.¹²

Changing attitudes is key to better protecting older adults against the risks of influenza

In many countries, **structural barriers** to influenza vaccination need to be lifted. These include access, affordability and availability of new influenza vaccines with improved effectiveness in older adults.

Attitudinal barriers also play a pivotal role in deciding whether to get vaccinated against influenza. Research by the International Longevity Centre (ILC), with the support of Sanofi Pasteur, found that older adults' attitudes need to be carefully considered and addressed in order to reach the target influenza vaccination coverage rates.¹³



The research found that:

Older people did not perceive influenza as a dangerous illness, nor as a distinct trigger for vaccination.



"[...] I think when you're older you may need some booster, but I don't think any serious disease vaccinations."

Male, Australia

They did not realize that they are generally more vulnerable to disease as they age.



"I don't think age matters. It depends on [the] person."

Female, Japan

They also did not know that there are influenza vaccines specifically tailored for people in their age group.



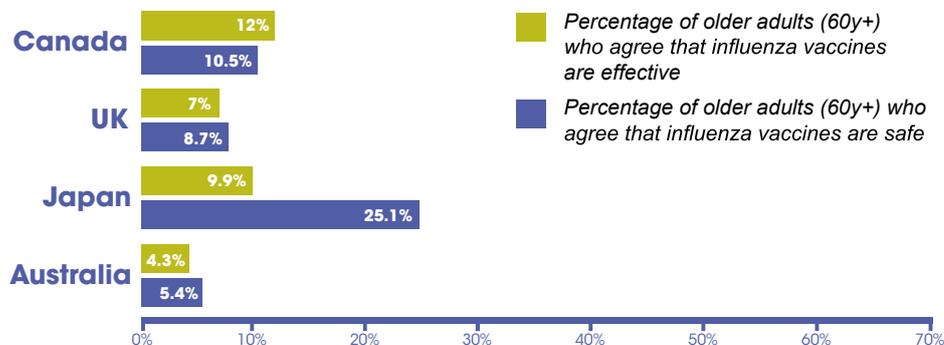
"No, I am not aware for a particular group. I think they apply to everyone. Maybe it's different, but I am not sure. I didn't enquire about any differences." **Male, Australia**

Their attitudes were based on a number of misconceptions about the safety and effectiveness of influenza vaccines.



"And if you get your flu vaccination then you get the flu."
Female, UK

Attitudes towards the safety and effectiveness of influenza vaccines¹³



Older adults want to stay healthy in later life – and see it as their personal responsibility to keep themselves healthy.



"One of the things that we learned was that older adults don't think about vaccination in isolation, they think about it in terms of their overall health care." Stakeholder, Canada

The 'Under the skin: Listening to the voices of older people on influenza immunisation' report developed by the International Longevity Centre, with the support of Sanofi Pasteur, provided insights into the attitudes of older adults towards influenza immunization.¹³ It involved interviews with 48 people aged 60 and over and 19 public health stakeholders across the UK, Australia, Canada and Japan, from February to April 2019.¹³

We can do more to protect older people against the risks of influenza

With improved understanding of what guides older people's decision to get vaccinated against influenza, there is a clear opportunity to:

- Engage with older adults' willingness to live longer healthily by raising awareness of influenza vaccination as a simple step that they can take to keep healthy and active.
- Raise awareness of the risks of influenza and of the existence of influenza vaccines specifically tailored for older adults.
- Include influenza vaccination in global, regional, and national Healthy Ageing action plans.

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