

Drivers and barriers of influenza vaccination in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2025: Qualitative study with risk groups and physicians

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Abstract Content:

Background

Seasonal influenza remains a significant public health challenge, particularly for older adults and individuals with chronic conditions. This study explored factors influencing influenza vaccination decisions among these high-risk groups in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, an entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a middle-income country with low vaccination coverage. Perspectives from primary health care providers were also included.

Methods

A qualitative study was conducted using 15 focus groups with 131 participants from high-risk groups and semi-structured interviews with 18 physicians. The discussion guide explored knowledge and health literacy regarding influenza vaccination, access to vaccination services, social support and norms, and attitudes and intentions toward vaccination. Transcripts were analyzed using a deductive coding framework based on a modified Capability–Opportunity–Motivation Behavior (COM-B) model.

Results

Participants identified access to reliable information, proactive health system engagement, and improved access to influenza vaccines as key drivers of vaccine acceptance. Physicians emphasized organizational support and sustained communication initiatives to increase vaccination coverage. Findings indicate that healthcare worker recommendations significantly impact patient decisions, but limited consultation time and resources constrain their ability to actively promote vaccination. Participants also reported increased exposure to misinformation during the COVID-19 pandemic, which negatively affected vaccine confidence.

Conclusions

Context-specific behavioral and system-level determinants shape influenza vaccination uptake in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Strengthening targeted patient education and information dissemination, supporting healthcare workers in vaccination recommendations, and improving organization and accessibility of vaccination services may increase coverage among high-risk groups.