



## Spread the word, not the flu: ED nurses we need YOU

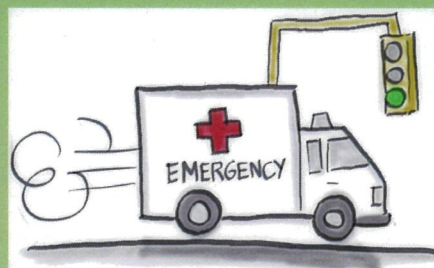
*What are the benefits of Emergency Department (ED) nurses annually getting the influenza vaccination and what barriers prevent nurses from getting it?*



### Overview...

Influenza is a highly contagious airborne virus that affects the nose, throat and lungs and can be highly debilitating if acquired (Harris, Nagy & Vardaxis, 2010). The annual influenza vaccination can protect recipients by stimulating the body to produce antibodies to fight off the virus, should it come in contact with it that year.

The vaccination is about 80% effective in healthy adults under the age of 65 years (National Influenza Specialist Group, 2014).



### Relevance to ED...

ED nurses are at the frontline of health care and required to work in an uncontrollable environment with hundreds of different patients presenting each day. They also interact with numerous staff members from areas all across the hospital on a daily basis. Thus, they are at an increased risk of being exposed to the influenza virus; however statistics suggest that only 56% of NZ nurses are immunised against influenza (Ministry of Health, 2013).

### Review of literature...

#### Benefit of vaccination for ED nurses...

1. Protect the nurse themselves (Music, 2001)
2. Protect patient's safety (Aziz, 2013)
3. Economic benefits for the organisation the nurse is working for (Hubble, Zontek & Richards, 2011).

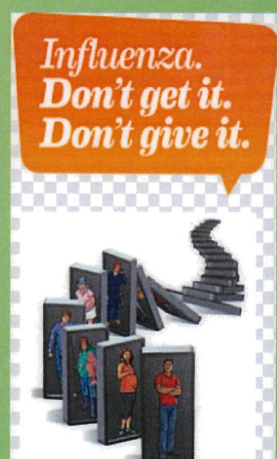
vs.

#### Barriers to ED nurses being vaccinated...

1. Misconceptions regarding the vaccination, such as that the vaccination makes you ill with the virus (National Influenza Specialist Group, 2014).
2. Feeling of invincibility over the virus (Hubble, Zontek & Richards, 2011).

### Summary of findings from literature...

Literature has suggested that there are numerous benefits of ED nurses receiving the annual influenza vaccination and that they play an important role in breaking the influenza cycle, however vaccine uptake is low. This may be due to the barriers mentioned which acknowledge that there are many misconceptions about the vaccine, often amplified by ill-informed media. It is important that nurses are aware of the benefits and risks of the vaccine so that they are able to make an informed decision for themselves to decide if they want to receive it or not, but also so they can provide appropriate and accurate education to others.



### Where to from here? Recommendations for practice...

- Health promotion to both nurses and patients about the benefits of the vaccine as well as to overcome the barriers and correct misconceptions, with an aim to increase vaccination uptake
- Promotion of the national campaigns that advocate free influenza vaccinations for specific groups of people to encourage them to engage with this. Some ED nurses may fit these groups and therefore be eligible for free vaccination
- Encouragement to see if the DHB that the nurse is working for offers free influenza vaccination for workers
- Further research to be undertaken with particular reference to New Zealand ED nurses.

#### References:

- Aziz, A. (2013). Improving influenza uptake in frontline staff. *British Journal of Nursing* 22(12), 1214-1220.
- Harris, P., Nagy, S., & Vardaxis, N. (2010). *Mosby's dictionary of medicine, nursing and health professionals* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Chatswood, Australia: Elsevier.
- Hubble, M. W., Zontek, T. L., & Richards, M. E. (2011). Predictors of influenza vaccination among Emergency Services Personnel. *Prehospital Emergency Care* 15(2), 175-182.
- Music, T. (2001). Protecting patients, protecting healthcare workers: a review of the role of the influenza vaccination. *International Council of Nurses*, 59(2), 161-166.
- National Influenza Specialist Group. (2014). *Influenza info for Health Professionals*. Retrieved from <http://www.influenza.org.nz>

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The following table represents how I used the PECOT model to refine my search question from “Should nurses be immunised?” to “What are the benefits of ED nurses annually getting the influenza vaccination and what barriers prevent nurses from receiving it?”

PECOT category	Information relating to question	Explanation
Population	Nurses working in the ED	ED nurses have frequent patient contact with numerous people and are more likely to come in contact with the virus.
Exposure	Benefits of getting the influenza vaccination	I will be looking literature that explores the benefits of nurses getting the influenza vaccination compared to not receiving it.
Comparison	Nurses in the ED who do not get the influenza vaccination	What are the risks for nurses and patients who do not get the vaccine? What are the barriers that stop ED nurses from receiving the vaccination?
Outcome	Benefits to the nurse, patients and the organisation	I want to explore what the benefits of nurses in ED getting the vaccine are and be able to apply this to clinical practice.
Time	Annually	The influenza virus changes annually so the vaccination is updated to act to immunise against the current strain.