

Belief that flu jab really works boosts uptake among health-care workers

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A belief that the seasonal flu jab really works is far more likely to sway healthcare professionals to get vaccinated than the potential to protect at risk patients from infection, finds research published in *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*.

Healthcare systems in many developed countries have struggled to persuade clinicians on the frontline to have the seasonal flu jab to prevent the spread of the virus to patients.

The researchers trawled the available published evidence on the subject in a bid to re-analyse the data and find out what factors encouraged or discouraged healthcare professionals to opt for seasonal [flu vaccination](#).

They found 13 suitable studies, involving just under 85,000 [healthcare workers](#) in hospitals in North America, Europe, and Australia.

Overall, doctors were more willing to have the jab than nurses.

But the most significant persuasive factors were knowing that the vaccine really works; a willingness to prevent spread of the virus; a belief that the virus is highly contagious and that prevention is important; and having a family that is usually vaccinated.

These were all associated with a greater than twofold increase in flu jab uptake, as was convenient access to vaccination.

Willingness to protect either themselves or patients at risk of complications if infected; a previous bout of flu; being in contact with children or having direct contact with patients had little influence on whether to have the seasonal flu jab.

The authors point out that [pandemic influenza](#) differs from seasonal flu in many ways. "But some of the described factors might also be important in a pandemic," they suggest.

And they add: "[Influenza vaccination](#) will only be successful in [healthcare workers] if they are properly educated and if the vaccine is easily accessible."

Provided by British Medical Journal

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