Knowledge of updated pneumococcal vaccine recommendations, and evaluation of perceived susceptibility, severity, benefits and barriers to vaccination among adults 65 years old and older

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Practice Site: Virginia Commonwealth University and Bremo Pharmacy

Purpose/ Background:
Bremo Pharmacy is an independent community pharmacy located in Richmond, Virginia and serves a primarily elderly population. There is a strong focus on administering vaccinations to patients at Bremo Pharmacy. Recent changes in recommendations for the pneumococcal vaccine will impact this patient population. As of August 2014, the US Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends a dose of 13-valent pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV13) in series with 23-valent pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPVS23) for all adults aged 65 years and older. In February 2015, Medicare part B coverage was expanded to allow beneficiaries to receive a PCV13 and PPSV23 vaccine dose administered 1 year apart. The 2014 National Health Interview Survey estimated 61.3% of adults ≥ 65 years old have received a pneumococcal vaccine. This suggests a need for increasing vaccination awareness and rates in this population.

Research Objective:
To identify the percentage of adults 65 years old and over who are aware of the recent changes in the pneumococcal vaccine guidelines and who are up-to-date on pneumococcal vaccine and to evaluate perceived susceptibility, severity, barriers, and benefit to receiving the pneumococcal vaccine.

Methodology:
A survey was developed based on the health belief model. The survey was tested for content and clarity using a sample group of patients and then modified accordingly before it was used among the survey population (adults 65 years old and over). The survey contained 5-point Likert-scale questions to assess perceived susceptibility, severity, benefits and barriers, multiple-choice questions, and questions to gather basic demographics. The surveys were mailed out or delivered to patients with their prescriptions with a pre-addressed, postage-paid envelope for returning the completed survey. Additionally, pharmacy staff were trained to identify patients 65 years and older at the point-of-sale and invite them to participate in completing the survey. This prospective, convenience sample survey was initiated in February 2016 and will be conducted over 3 months through April 2016. The survey responses will be analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Preliminary Results:
Of the 35 completed survey responses, 54.3% were male and 45.7% were female, 83% were Caucasian, 77.1% stated they had some college education or higher and 80% have Medicare part B insurance coverage. Less than 35% were aware of the current pneumococcal vaccination recommendations. Overall, 88% of the survey population recognize that pneumococcal disease is a severe illness for their age and 50% demonstrated perceived susceptibility. The major barrier to vaccination cited was side effects of the vaccine. About 25% of survey participants agreed that they would be more likely to get vaccinated at a pharmacy versus a doctor’s office and 41% disagreed. Majority of the patients chose a pharmacy newsletter or email as their preferred method of receiving educational information.
Preliminary Conclusions:

The survey population is not well aware of the current pneumococcal vaccination recommendations and there is a need for education. This information can be shared with patients using the pharmacy newsletter or email. Pharmacists have the opportunity to educate patients on vaccinations and increase pharmacist recommendations for the pneumococcal vaccines at the pharmacy.