



Our Mission:

The Saint Louis University School of Public Health is dedicated to the discovery, translation, and dissemination of public health knowledge to improve the health and well being of all.



Influenza Vaccine Safety Messages

The project team completed a series of in-depth interviews and focus groups with African Americans age 50 and older and their providers in the St. Louis area regarding concerns about flu vaccine safety and side effects. Information from the general public and providers was used to develop messages to allay concerns about influenza vaccination in older African Americans. Messages were pre-tested twice with general audience members before finalization. This study is funded by the CDC. Dr. Ricardo Wray is the principal investigator.

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Discovery

What is the health problem?

- ❖ Approximately 36,000 individuals die each year of influenza in the United States. Older adults are at greatest risk, with more than 90% of mortality in individuals older than 65 years of age.
- ❖ Despite the existence of an effective vaccine, vaccine use rates remain low, at 65% on average; vaccine use is even lower among the young and minority groups. The primary reason given for not receiving the vaccine is concern about safety and side effects.

Translation

How do we take what we know and apply it to influenza prevention?

- ❖ Focus groups and interviews explored concerns about safety and adverse events and their sources among older African Americans.
- ❖ Interviews and focus groups gathered information from providers about their experiences providing flu shots and strategies they and their organization had used to promote vaccination.
- ❖ Messages were developed addressing influenza vaccine safety and efficacy based on the formative research, and pre-tested with older African Americans.

Dissemination

How did we disseminate the messages?

- ❖ Formative research and pre-test results were presented at the 2005 American Public Health Association Annual Meeting and the 2006 National Immunization Conference.
- ❖ Publication of formative research results in a primary care journal will expose clinicians to fears and concerns of their patients and to information strategies to help allay them.
- ❖ Audience-tested message materials provided to the CDC will be included in National Immunization Program informational materials sent to primary care physicians and other health care facilities around the country at the beginning of each flu season.

Change

What changes occurred because of the dissemination?

- ❖ The CDC will integrate audience-tested materials addressing concerns and fears about flu vaccines into vaccine promotion materials.
- ❖ Instead of generic materials that are targeted to all populations and cover general influenza vaccination needs, our materials provide in-depth information on the most cited areas of concern for older African Americans.