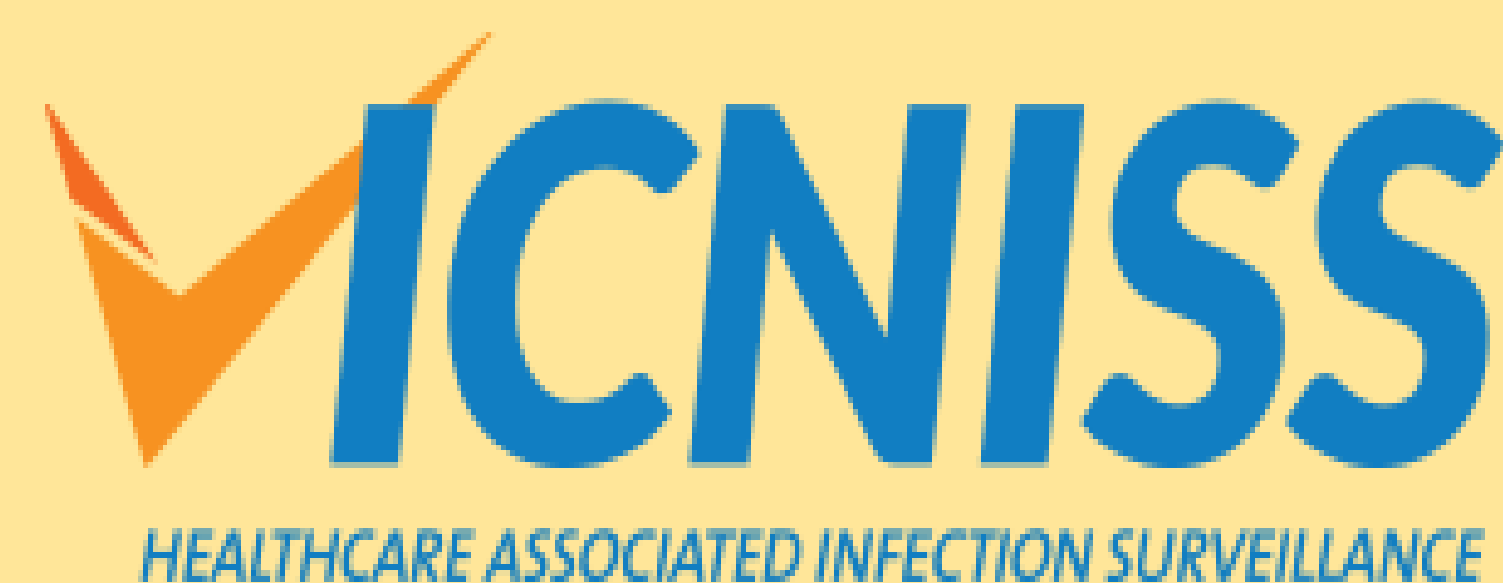


INFLUENZA VACCINATION UPTAKE OF VICTORIAN HEALTHCARE WORKERS IN A NON-MANDATORY SETTING



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Introduction

Australian and international guidelines recommend that healthcare workers (HCWs) have access to vaccines and serological testing to ensure protection against vaccine-preventable diseases (VPD). In March 2020, legislation was passed that mandates the vaccination of all Victorian HCWs. Whilst existing Victorian policy supports this legislation, the legislation has not as yet been enacted. **We sought to review historical influenza vaccine uptake of Victorian HCWs and compare these with more recent influenza vaccination uptake by workers within the aged care sector.**

Method

All Victorian public healthcare facilities performed an annual period prevalence survey of HCW influenza vaccination compliance from 2014 to 2020. All Victorian public Aged Care Homes commenced a similar survey in 2018. For the acute sector, data could be submitted at hospital or health service level. The rate for high risk HCWs (Emergency and Intensive Care Workers) were required. A health-service encompassed all acute, sub-acute and aged-care services with common governance.



Results

Table 1. ACUTE CARE HEALTHCARE WORKERS

Total Healthcare Workers	Influenza Aggregate Vaccination Rates (%)							
	Year	2014*	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target		75	75	75	75	80	84	90
Victorian Facilities		72.2	78.7	79.9	80.1	83.2	87.7	93.0
Emergency Department		73.9	82.5	83.7	82.1	83.9	91.1	93.0
ICU Adult		75.7	86.4	84.2	86.1	88.6	91.2	93.9
ICU Neonate		77.9	82.5	86.1	85.9	88.4	92.7	91.5
ICU Paediatric		89.7	89.8	95.6	93.8	93.2	97.3	95.5

* Prior to 2014, overall proportion of HCWs vaccinated ranged from 37.8% (2005) to 59.2% (2013)

Table 2. AGED CARE WORKERS

Total Aged Care Workers	Influenza Vaccination Rates					
	Year	Participating agencies (No)	HCWs employed (No)	Vaccinated (%)	Declined (%)	Unknown (%)
	2018	177	12536	86.9	7.6	5.5
	2019	175	13844	88.0	8.5	6.3
	2020	177	12270	98.8*	0.0	1.2

* 2020 Mandatory influenza vaccination initiated as part of COVID 19 State of Emergency in Victoria

Conclusion:

The target rate for the acute sector influenza vaccination campaign increased slowly over 7 years. A significant contributor was the inclusion of HCW influenza vaccination uptake as an annual key performance indicator for Victorian hospitals. Future policy directives including mandatory HCW vaccination, should proceed with acknowledgement of the potential benefit of including a range of VPDs as performance indicators. Looking ahead, both strategies, would likely result in increased evidence of immunity rates for all VPD.

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