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Strategies for neglected infection diseases, the example of diphtheria

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Background:

Most of infant vaccinations (diphtheria, polio, tetanus) are not mandatory for occupational exposures. Vaccination against diphtheria is important to protect determined groups of workers whom could be exposed to this infection, e.g. after meeting foreign people.

The aim of this study was to estimate the vaccination coverage, but also the knowledge and the behaviour of workers toward vaccination against diphtheria.

Method:

A cross sectional study was conducted during one year, using data included in the medical occupational files of a group of miscellaneous population of workers.

We established a distribution of jobs leading to high, medium and low risks to be contaminated by diphtheria.

Results:

The high-risk group predominated (45% of the whole population studied) with identifying 55.5% of vaccinated people, 22.2% of unvaccinated ones and 22.2% who had an unknown status.

Half of the medium exposure group (13% of the whole population studied) was vaccinated and 45.8% of the low-risk population (40% of the whole population studied) was immunized.

Discussion:

The belief that vaccinations are effective and safe was positively associated with willingness to be vaccinated. Despite recommendations, the widespread use of this vaccine in the working population clearly postpones the vaccine intake and its successes documented for paediatric vaccination programs.

Globally, half of the working population vaccinated against diphtheria should be considered to be not sufficient, and the vaccination coverage against this disease has to be enhanced.

Biography

Frederic J Deschamps is Medical Doctor (Lille-France University in 1990). He completed PhD in Occupational Toxicology in 1993. He was nominated Professor of Medicine in 2002. For the last 20 years, he has improved the Department of Occupational Diseases of the University Hospital of Reims (Champagne County). He managed the Regional Institute of Occupational Health in 1995. He belongs to the French National University College of Occupational Researches and Practitioners. He has focused his work on occupational infectious diseases and health effects of low dosed toxics with long term exposure.

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