Looking back on 2011, looking forward to 2012

This is the last issue of Vaccine Update for 2011 and as we approach the end of the year, it’s worth reflecting on what has been achieved over the previous 12 months and thinking about what we hope to achieve in 2012 and beyond.

There have been several significant successes during 2011, including reaching the highest levels of coverage of childhood immunisations ever (see issue 183) and world-leading high levels of HPV vaccine uptake (see issue 181).

The policy team within the immunisation branch has had several notable achievements during the year, including:

- publishing three key vaccine documents: Hepatitis B antenatal screening and newborn immunisation programme; The seasonal flu plan and Consultation: a review of the procurement of seasonal vaccine.

- working with DsPH, HPA, PCT and SHA leads and other parts of the DH to ensure that moving into the new health service structures, immunisation services are safeguarded and considered a priority. This is why they get a specific mention in the Public health outcomes framework and other public health documents.

The article on ImmForm in this issue gives some remarkable figures on the number of vaccine orders placed over the previous 11 months and the number of doses of vaccine that this represents.

The immunisation section of the DH website has been revamped – see last month’s issue and in the Resources section we show how many leaflets and posters have been ordered through the year.

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Looking to the future, and guided by the recommendations of the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), we will continue to consider the feasibility of introducing rotavirus vaccine for newborns, and shingles vaccine for those born 70 years or more ago. JCVI will also be looking at a number of new possibilities, including extensions to the flu vaccination programme, the introduction of a meningococcal B vaccination programme, and extra immunisations for adolescents. And, as already announced, the HPV vaccine will be switching from Cervarix to Gardasil in September. As always, the development of all of these exciting and important initiatives will be covered in future issues of Vaccine Update.

It goes without saying that the successes we have enjoyed, and those we hope to continue to enjoy, could not be achieved without the total commitment and dedication of all those health professionals who have the management and administration of immunisations as part of their duties. We owe you a great debt of gratitude.

So, with that in mind, we at the Immunisation Team in the Department of Health, wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy new year.

Immunisation news

Seasonal flu
Data on the incidence of flu-like illness and the uptake of flu vaccine among those aged 65 and over, those in at-risk groups, and pregnant women are now available on a weekly basis via the Winterwatch part of the DH website which links to the Health Protection Agency’s weekly national flu report.

Data on flu vaccine uptake by pregnant women
As we have received a number of questions about data on the uptake of flu vaccine by pregnant women, we would like provide information about which data are collected and the context in which they should be interpreted.

Data on flu vaccinations of pregnant women are being collected as part of the 2011/12 survey of flu vaccinations of GP patients via the ImmForm website. For the purposes of monitoring uptake, the denominator is defined as:

- all women who are pregnant (for any period of time, however brief) or get pregnant between 1 Sept 2011 and 31 Jan 2012, (first, second or third trimesters) as confirmed by a medical professional, e.g. GP, midwife.
The numerator is defined as:

- all those in this group who receive flu vaccine between 1 September 2011 to 31 January 2012 inclusive.

The denominator therefore includes women who may lose their pregnancy for whatever reason and those that give birth during 1 September 2011 to 31 January 2012 before they may have been offered a vaccination.

Monitoring vaccine uptake by pregnant women is particularly challenging for a number of reasons, including:

- the dynamic nature of the group with women continually entering and leaving the risk group,
- the number and variable use of READ codes that can be used to identify pregnant women, and
- the delay in removing these READ codes following birth or loss of pregnancy.

In relation to the last point, we have become aware that there may be appreciable delays in the updating of GP practices records to reflect a change in pregnancy status following birth or loss of pregnancy. Therefore, women who were no longer pregnant by 1 September 2011 may be being included in the denominator.

It is likely, therefore, that flu vaccine uptake by pregnant women is underestimated due to denominator inflation. However, it is not possible to determine the scale of the underestimation and it could vary considerably between GP practices.

In addition, earlier in the 2011/12 data collection, we identified some variability in how GP IT systems suppliers had implemented the denominator specification. However, we believe the specification is being applied more consistently now.

Given all of the above, data on the uptake of flu vaccine by pregnant women should be interpreted in the context of the challenges of this data collection and that uptake is likely to be underestimated. Comparisons with estimated uptakes in other eligible groups are likely to be unreliable.

Given the challenges of this data collection, further consideration will be given as to how it may be improved ahead of any 2012/13 collection.

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Did you know?

• All vaccine orders for centrally purchased vaccines for the national immunisation programme are made via ImmForm – with over 145,000 orders for more than 12 million doses of different vaccines being placed between January 2011 and 30 November 2011.

• There are now over 17,000 registered users for ImmForm.

• We had over 400,000 page hits on the website in November.

• 73% of GP practices had their flu vaccine uptake data for the October survey uploaded by automated means, reducing the burden on practices.

Tips for completing the flu vaccine uptake survey on ImmForm

The document Flu survey ImmForm tips has been sent to PCT flu coordinators to cascade to GP practices. It is also published at web link 1 on the new immunisation channel on the DH website. These tips on using ImmForm to submit GP patient flu vaccine uptake have been compiled in response to some common queries and issues that were raised with the ImmForm helpdesk when completing the October survey.

Placing deferred vaccine orders on ImmForm

Did you know that instead of processing an order immediately, an order can be deferred so that it is not submitted until a specified date. This will allow customers to place an advance order, for example if they are on holiday, instead of making a larger than normal order when there may be insufficient space in their vaccine fridge. Deferred orders can be made up to three months in advance. For more information on how to create a deferred order in advance, please refer to Helpsheet 19 (web link 2).

Helpsheets – new home

The ImmForm helpsheets are now available under the new immunisation channel at web link 3. These helpsheets provide information on how to access, register and make the best use of the ImmForm website. Several helpsheets have recently been updated.
Coming soon – Terms of use and Privacy policy

We will be publishing the Terms of Use and Privacy policy for the ImmForm website very shortly. This is in line with common practice for other websites.

These terms of use tell you how you may use the ImmForm services and the ImmForm website.

The Privacy policy explains how the Department of Health uses any information you give to us as a registered user of the ImmForm website, and the way we protect your privacy. Protecting the privacy and personal data of the registered users of the ImmForm website is of the utmost importance to us.

Goodbye, organisational logins…

ImmForm logins using NHS organisation codes have now been withdrawn. Individual logins are more secure than shared logins. The benefits are as follows.

• There is no need for customers to share a password.
• If a customer forgets their password, they will be able to request a password reset email. This allows them to reset their own secure password online without affecting other customers at the same organisation.
• Individuals placing orders or submitting data can be identified, helping us deal with queries and for audit purposes.
• Individual logins will enable ImmForm to offer customers more tailored information.
• Customers that work for more than one organisation can have those organisations linked to their individual login.

…hello, personal logins!

If you are already a known contact to ImmForm you can use the ‘Forgotten passwords’ procedure described in ImmForm Helpsheet 10 – Passwords.

If you are not an existing contact on ImmForm, you can register for an account online at web link 4. Please see ImmForm helpsheet 8 – How to register.

The new individual login is personal to you. Please remember that ImmForm website is secure and password protected, so you need to keep your password safe and secure to prevent unauthorised access. If you have colleagues that need to use ImmForm, they should register in their own right.

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2TU and 10TU orders
We occasionally (but regularly) get queries from GP practices asking how they dispose of unwanted 10TU, because they ordered it by mistake, instead of 2TU. Once delivered, these items cannot be returned, so incorrectly ordered items have to be destroyed, which is a huge waste. Sometimes we get calls asking what is the difference between the two products. As 2TU is the product used for routine screening, it is most likely to be ordered by a GP practice (although some involved in TB clinics might have a need for 10TU too). 10TU should be used if a second Mantoux test is required for clinical diagnostic purposes. 10TU is nearly three times more expensive than 2TU, so if you order either of these products, please make sure you order the right one.

Resources
Leaflets and posters
Following the rationalisation of the immunisation publication list in November 2010, (see that month’s issue of Vaccine Update), and the move towards electronic publication, there is still high demand for printed materials. Over 2.85 million leaflets and posters have been ordered in the last 12 months, with the ‘Babies’ leaflet most in demand (more copies distributed than the birth cohort!), closely followed by the ‘Secondary school’ leaflet and then the HPV leaflet. The ‘Pre-school’ and TB, BCG vaccine and your baby leaflets were also heavily ordered.

Vaccine supply
Movianto UK deliveries over Christmas and New Year holidays
Due to the Christmas and New Year holidays, there will be no deliveries or order processing by Movianto UK on Monday 26 Dec, Tuesday 27 Dec, Wednesday 28 Dec and Monday 2 January 2012. Deliveries normally scheduled for these days will not be rescheduled, so please bear this in mind when placing orders. For example, if your normal delivery day is a Monday, the cut off for placing an order for a delivery for use over the holiday period is 11.55am on Thursday 15 Dec for delivery on Monday 19 Dec. If you miss this date, the next Monday delivery will be Monday 9 Jan. The normal delivery cycle resumes on Tuesday 3 Jan and the normal ordering cycle resumes on Thursday 5 Jan.

Please see the table next page for further details.

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Orders can still be placed on ImmForm on all days, but they will not be processed by Movianto UK for dispatch at their warehouse, hence the revised order cut off day. We recommend that you have two to four weeks of vaccine stock held in your fridge, so you may wish to consider this when ordering for the holiday period. We also recommend that you have at least two contacts registered on ImmForm, as cover for leave etc.

To register, please see the ImmForm Helpsheet on how to register at [web link 5](#).

**Christmas and New Year orders and deliveries**

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*NB As Scotland has a bank holiday on Tuesday 3 January, no deliveries will be made on that day.*

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Web links

Web link 1  http://immunisation.dh.gov.uk/immform-tips-gp-patient-flu-vacc-survey
Web link 3  http://immunisation.dh.gov.uk/immform-helpsheets
Web link 4  https://www.immform.dh.gov.uk/registration

Register now - feedback - contact us

To receive a copy of Vaccine Update emailed direct to you each month, to provide any comments or suggestions, or if you have a query about any aspect of vaccine supply, please email us at vaccine.supply@dh.gsi.gov.uk

This document has been authorised by the Department of Health: Gateway reference no: 17017