



Newsletter, 14 October 2021

Today, on October 14th, we mark this year's EU Flu Day with a special newsletter.

Up until 2019, influenza vaccination was a marginal issue. Most people thought they were safe from flu, and that influenza vaccination was only for at-risk groups. There was a similar assumption when COVID-19 first appeared in Europe: "I am healthy and young, and therefore not vulnerable." However, the reality turned out to be very different. The COVID-19 pandemic showed that being young, healthy and with a good physical status does not necessarily make anyone safe. Since the start of the pandemic, nurses witnessed patients from across all age groups coming into their hospitals for treatment –sometimes ending up at ICU's, or even worse.

Vaccination against COVID-19 is today possible, thanks to an unprecedented collaborative success between regulators and industry. However, as we all know, the COVID-19 pandemic is not fully over yet. It takes time to understand the true impact and dynamics of virus outbreaks. Only over the next few years to come, we will be able to draw more decisive conclusions. Because of this, we will need to stay on high alert for any consequences in the wake of COVID-19.



Influenza vaccination as a prerequisite to keep fragile health systems working

Examples of such consequences are the unforeseen health threats caused by the measures taken to mitigate the COVID-19 pandemic, such as social distancing and hand washing. Last summer, we saw very small children and new-borns with serious breathing conditions caused by Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV). Because of the lockdowns, there was very low circulation of the virus, which led to low developed resistance in children's immune systems.

All evidence shows that something similar could happen with seasonal influenza, as there is very high uncertainty about the influenza variant. This is what this year's EU Flu Day aims to spread awareness about.

For any new designed building, the architect works closely with the construction workers to create a joint, long-term vision. This type of strong collaboration based on a shared purpose will lead to good, high-quality outcomes. This is needed also in relation to vaccination programmes:

a long-term vision and for the years to come, instead of just annual awareness weeks.

Since the start of the pandemic, various stakeholders including virologists, epidemiologists and the industry have been able to develop impressive data and policy suggestions on vaccination. However, there is a communication gap in connecting this information to civil society. It is not enough to step back and expect healthcare professionals to simply make it work. Instead, what is needed is a collaborative approach to vaccination programmes including healthcare professionals from the start.

As nurses are at the front line of health provision in vaccination facilities, we also need to see nurses represented in all collaborative programmes and projects. When given the opportunity to take on the professional control and responsibility they are trained for, nurses are strong drivers successful outcomes. We call on policymakers to ensure that nurses are included in the development and roll-out of influenza campaigns, to ensure good policies we can be proud of when spring arrives.

"A group becomes a team when each member is sure enough of himself and his contribution to praise the skills of others"

- Norma Shidle

We hope that this year's EU Flu Day will mark the starting point of a new, collaborative vision regarding vaccination, aiming to safeguard progress in vaccination policy for the next years to come. Furthermore, we encourage all nurses to take the influenza vaccination campaign seriously, and to help protect populations by increasing influenza vaccination uptake.



For more information on ESNO in relation to Vaccination, please visit our special webpage [<here>](#) and our ongoing projects for the next years to come in the ESNO Foundation of Nurses Specialist European [<here>](#) and direct link to our Education and Communication Guide [<here>](#). For any wishes to engagement in our projects and educational activities, contact us at secretariat@esno.org and follow social media with [#EUFluDay](#).

