VAC-PACT PILOT PROJECT
VACCINATION CONFIDENCE – PATIENTS' AND PROFESSIONALS' AWARENESS, COMMUNICATIONS & TRUST

Vaccination & Chronic Diseases

Funded by the European Union

The **status quo**

- Thousands of adults around the world get sick from diseases that could be prevented by vaccines every year.
- People with **chronic diseases and long-term conditions**, in specific, are often at higher-risk of complications from **vaccine-preventable diseases**.

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that:

2-3 million deaths

are prevented by immunisation every year.

- **The COVID-19 pandemic is a reminder of the serious impact infectious diseases can have** and of how critical vaccines are in the prevention and control of outbreaks.
- Older people with chronic diseases are particularly vulnerable to complications from infectious diseases. The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) estimates that:

30% of the population

in the EU/EEA is either over 60 years old or has an underlying conditions associated with COVID-19 risk.

Reminder

Certain vaccines may not be recommended for **some people with compromised immune systems**, putting them at **higher risk to the falling rates of vaccination** in the population.

Talk to a healthcare professional, discuss your individual situation and health needs, and make sure you get your vaccinations up to date.

Vaccine basics

When unwanted germs such as bacteria or viruses invade the body, they attack and multiply, causing an imbalance in the health system. This invasion is called an **infection** and is what causes a **disease**.

What?
Vaccines

Vaccines are biological preparations administrated to stimulate the body's natural defenses to develop protective and relatively long-lasting adaptive **immunity** (resistance) to a specific disease.

Vaccines are usually administered through needle injections, but can also be administered by mouth or sprayed into the nose.

Why?
Vaccination

Vaccines stimulate the body's natural defences to create **antibodies**, just as it does when it is exposed to a disease, but instead when given in controlled doses, it helps build resistance to the specific infections. Vaccination prevents us from getting sick by effectively inducing an **immune response** (defence against foreign substance) in the body without causing illness.

How?
Immunisation

Vaccination is the use of vaccines to produce **immunity** against a serious disease, rather than treating a disease after it occurs. Without vaccines, we are at risk of life-threatening diseases and disability. The process of becoming immune to (protected against) a disease through vaccination is called **immunisation**.

VACCINE-INDUCED HERD IMMUNITY

- **Vaccination** protects those vaccinated, the people around them, and the overall community. When **enough people** in a population are **immune** to an infectious disease, the disease is then unlikely to spread from person to person. This is known as **community immunity** (also referred to as **herd immunity**).
- This is especially beneficial for **subgroups of the population who cannot be vaccinated**, or in which **the effect of vaccination could be sub-optimum** (e.g., people with compromised immune systems due to autoimmune diseases, recent organ transplant, cancer treatment, and/or allergies).

PARTNERS IN CARE

People sometimes underestimate the risk of catching a disease which can lead to the decision of not being vaccinated. This could potentially **result in a serious risk** to their health, if they become infected, **and to the health of others** by spreading the disease.

Patients, accordingly, need to be better informed about the risks of not being vaccinated!

Healthcare professionals' advice also has an important impact on attitudes towards **vaccination**. It is vital that lack of vaccination uptake and hesitancy is addressed through **open dialogue, backed with scientific evidence**.

The messenger may be more important than the message itself for people to accept health interventions!

PARTNERS IN CARE

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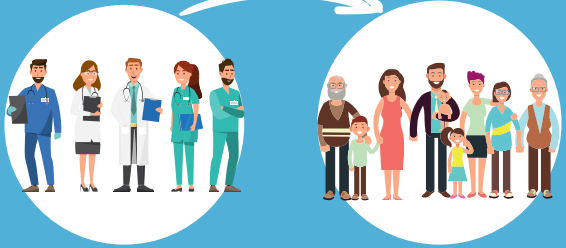
Traditional practice

Paternalistic information + recommendations
Informed decision



Shared decision making

Information + Recommendations
Personal values + Preferences