

Vaccine Coverage Dutch National Influenza Prevention Program 2021: brief monitor

M.J. Heins, J.C. Korevaar, B.J. Knottnerus, M. Hooiveld

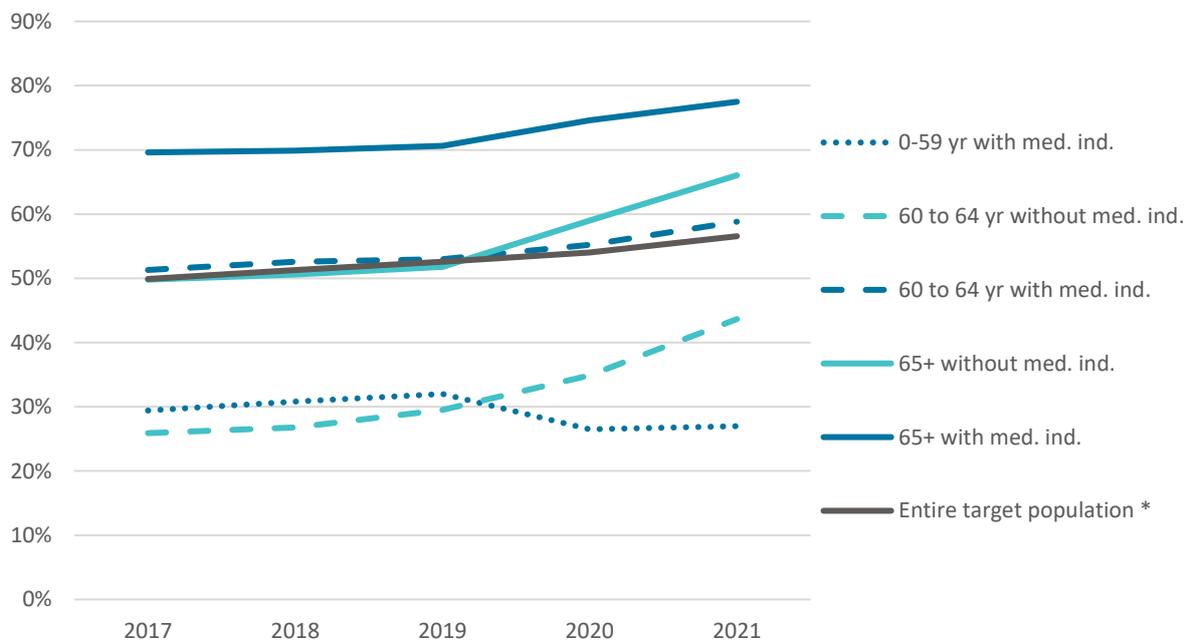
Increase in influenza vaccine coverage in 2021

During the annual influenza vaccination campaign of 2021, more people were vaccinated compared to 2020. The vaccine coverage in the general population increased from 20.8% in 2020 to 22.9% in 2021. Among persons with an increased risk for complications due to influenza, because of age or a medical condition, vaccine coverage increased from 54.0% to 58.3%.

A possible explanation for the increase in influenza vaccine coverage could be that people were more aware of the importance of influenza vaccination, e.g. because the importance of vaccination against influenza was emphasized during the COVID-19 pandemic. Interestingly, since the COVID-19 pandemic (2020 and 2021) more people started flu vaccination than before. These are people who also received an invitation for vaccination in earlier years, but were not vaccinated then.

The highest vaccine coverage (77.5%) was observed among persons of 65 years or older who also had a medical indication for vaccination. Vaccine coverage was lower in persons under 60 years of age with a medical indication for vaccination (27.0%).

Figure 1 Trend in Influenza vaccine coverage by age group and medical indication*, 2017-2021



* In 2020 and 2021, criteria for a medical indication for influenza vaccination were broader than in 2017 to 2019.

Table 1 Population size and influenza vaccine coverage within the target group, by age group and medical indication, 2021

Age group	Size (% of population)	Vaccine coverage (% of population)
0-59 years with medical indication*	9.4	27.0
60 years and older	28.4	66.6
Without medical indication	13.7	58.5
With medical indication	14.7	74.1
60 to 64 years	7.2	49.4
Without medical indication	4.5	43.7
With medical indication	2.7	58.8
65 years and older	21.2	72.6
Without medical indication	9.2	66.0
With medical indication	12.0	77.5
Entire target population	39.3	58.3

* Persons under age 60 only belong to the target population if they have a medical indication for influenza vaccination.

Table 2 Population size and influenza vaccine coverage by specific medical indication for vaccination, 2021

Medical indication	Size (% of target population)	Vaccine coverage (% of group)
Cardiovascular diseases	8,1	69,1
Pulmonary diseases	8,3	56,5
Diabetes mellitus	6,4	68,3
Weakened immune system	8,0	45,5
Chronic renal failure	2,2	69,6
Respiratory disorders caused by neurological conditions	0,6	58,4
HIV	0,1	50,6

Monitoring the Dutch National Influenza Prevention Program

An influenza infection is relatively harmless for most persons. However, in those who are vulnerable because of high age or medical conditions, influenza may cause serious complications. The World Health Organization (WHO) therefore advises that vulnerable groups should be vaccinated. Vaccination reduces both the risk of getting an influenza infection and the risk of complications if someone is infected. The Dutch National Influenza Prevention Program was established in 1997 and coordinates and implements the influenza vaccination program. Persons at risk for complications due to (the consequences of) influenza are invited to visit their general practitioner for influenza vaccination free of charge. The target group is defined as all people aged 60 years or older and people with certain (chronic) diseases. The annual monitoring of vaccination uptake rates allows one to evaluate the number of people that are vaccinated (vaccine coverage) each year. In 2009, the European Union set a target to reach a vaccine coverage of 75% in the elderly and, if possible, in those with a medical indication.

About the monitor

The monitor NPPV 2021 was performed by Nivel and commissioned by RIVM. Data from general practices participating in Nivel Primary Care Database were used for the analysis. For more information (in Dutch), see: [Monitor Vaccinatiegraad Nationaal Programma Grieppreventie 2021. Utrecht: Nivel, 2022](#)

Citing this publication

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