

Vaccination and infectious diseases: a never ending story

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The relationship between vaccine and infectious diseases can be easily considered a never ending story. In the 3rd issue of 2009 of this journal, thematic papers were related to vaccination policies and practice, with a particular focus on vaccine and vaccination evaluation and assessment (1-3).

In this issue, the connection between the thematic papers is the value of vaccines, observed from different points of view. Dorléans et al (4) present the results from an online survey, carried out by the VENICE project to investigate the decision-making process undertaken regarding the potential introduction of the HPV vaccinations into national immunisation programmes. This paper underlines also the modalities of implementation of the HPV vaccination programmes across Europe, and the potential of applying the Health Technology Assessment approach at the European level.

Liguori et al (5) in their paper face with an economic evaluation derived from the introduction of a new vaccine at the regional level. They show that offering anti-pneumococcal vaccination to all the newborns could give economic advantages to Campania Region, confers up to quite 1 million euros.

Ferrara and coll. (6) performed a school-based community trial for both promoting adherence to the primary and secondary prevention programs of HPV infections, and to actively inform about the potential and limits of the HPV vaccine. This trial underlines that HPV vaccine need of effective communication and monitoring of the spread of knowledge, especially among women identified as most in need of information and included in the age group at risk, are crucial to encourage informed choices.

Costantino et al (7) give an original view of determinants associated with influenza vaccine uptake among General Practitioner trainees. They found influenza vaccine uptake among these medical doctors is far from satisfactory, and pose the attention to the need of specific training in order to increase knowledge and attitudes towards this vaccination.

Spadea and coll (8) in their report explain the implementation of public health actions and vaccination strategies to monitor measles epidemic in a Local Health Unit. Their work is an interesting window on how to practically increase the immunization coverage once public health actions and vaccination strategies had been implemented at the local level.

Cadeddu et al (9) try to understand why vaccination is not fully appreciated for its real value by different stakeholders, such as medical doctors, policy makers and the general population. They confirm the need for a thorough “education in vaccination”, as well as the need for an “alliance” for promoting and implementing vaccination to its full potential. The last thematic paper, from Vaccaro and coll. (10), identifies and describes knowledge, beliefs and attitudes towards Human Papillomavirus (HPV) infection and HPV vaccination among Italian women aged between 18 and 55. They found through focus group (qualitative analysis) and a specific survey (quantitative analysis) that only a small portion of the female population, directly involved in the free vaccination scheme for adolescents, has actually been given information, often partial, on this subject.

Finally, we have to consider the value of vaccine is great and still not fully expressed, even if it is well recognised that vaccination strategies are one of the most powerful interventions in the field of Public Health worldwide, since that can reduce both morbidity and mortality.

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