



# Regional variation of influenza vaccination rates in the vaccination season 2007 / 2008

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## Abstract

**Background:** Influenza vaccination is an effective method for preventing influenza virus infection. According to the recommendation of the German Standing Vaccination Committee (STIKO) people should be vaccinated, if they are at high risk of having serious flu-related complications (e.g. people > 60 years or chronic ill patients) or because they care for people at high risk (e.g. health car workers).

**Method:** Based on nationwide ambulatory care claims data, all statutory health insured patients with at least one consultation in the year 2007 were included in the study. Vaccination rates were examined for the season 2007/2008.

**Results:** Age and sex-standardized vaccination rates varied considerably between the 413 administrative districts (range 11.1% to 35.7% (all age-groups) and 25.4% to 67.9% (patients > 60 years)) as well as between districts of the association of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians (range 13.1% to 31.0% (all age-groups) and 31.7% to 62.3% (patients > 60 years)). Vaccination rates in East Germany were nearly 2-fold higher as in West Germany. Moreover, vaccination rates were higher for chronic ill patients in comparison to not chronic ill patients (OR 7.75, 95%-CI 7.74-7.76) and for patients > 60 years in comparison to patients aged 60 years and younger (OR 7.54, 95% CI 7.53-7.55).

**Conclusion:** According to the STIKO-recommendation older people and chronic ill patients show higher influenza vaccination rates. The shown east-west differences are caused assumedly in the obligation of vaccination in the former GDR which has an impact until today. Regarding to the aim of the World Health Organization to cover 75% of all older people with influenza vaccination the study shows that especially in West Germany influenza vaccination rates could be optimized. References to socio-economic impact factors were shown, which are only phrase as hypothesis, since socioeconomic data are available only in aggregated form on the level of districts.