



NSW
Therapeutic
Advisory
Group Inc.

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Group Discussion: 2018 influenza vaccination and vaccine supply

Date: June 2018

Question:

NSW TAG and TAGNet members were asked to provide feedback regarding any issues or concerns related to this year's influenza vaccination and its supply and what they may be (as above or other).

Background:

NSW TAG received an enquiry from a member about the supply of the influenza vaccine from the State Vaccine Centre (SVC). Influenza vaccination is rather more complicated this year than it was in previous years with 4 brands of quadrivalent vaccines and 2 brands of the trivalent vaccines for >65 year olds now available. Furthermore the quadrivalent vaccines vary in the age groups that they may be used in.

It appears that there is potential for brand switching in the supply of these vaccines from the State Vaccine Centre, particularly with this year's Trivalent influenza vaccines [Fluad (adjuvant used) and Fluzone (high dose antigens used)], which are indicated for the same population. This may have implications for identification and traceability of the vaccine. Increasing the complexity, is the use of Fluad in those with a severe allergy to latex as advised in a TGA safety advisory released in April 2018.

There also seem to be circumstances where vaccines have been supplied directly to clinics rather than through pharmacy departments. This again would have implications for traceability and does not align with policy.

Additionally, it is not clear whether hospital staff and patients are aware of the brand they receive in hospital and whether immunisation information is provided to the Australian Immunisation Register for both staff and patients by hospitals as is recommended. Notification of adverse events following immunisation (at any age) through the usual reporting mechanisms may be compromised if the person immunised is not aware of the brand they received or whom to contact regarding this.

Responses:

Eight responses were received and are summarized in Table 1.



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Table 1: Reported influenza vaccine supply to hospitals, 2018 (as of 1st June 2018).

	Quadrivalent					Trivalent (>65 years only)	
Vaccine	FluQuadri Junior 0.25mL (Sanofi)	FluQuadri 0.5mL (Sanofi)	Fluarix Tetra 0.5mL (GSK)	Alfuria Quad 0.5mL (Seqirus)	Influvac Tetra 0.5mL (Mylan)	Fluzone High-Dose 0.5mL (Sanofi)	Fluad 0.5mL (Seqirus)
Comments	Only for 6-35 months.	Only for ≥ 3 years.	Only for ≥ 3 years.	Only for ≥ 18 years.	Only for ≥ 18 years.	Only for ≥ 18 years. Not suitable for pregnant or children.	Only for ≥ 18 years. Not suitable for pregnant or children. TGA warning re latex allergy 19 April 2018. Out of stock early May.
Hospital supply	Nepean	Nepean	Bowral	Nepean (SVC supplied to replace FluQuadri stock upon SVC request)		Liverpool Bankstown Nepean	Liverpool Bowral Nepean
			Bankstown but return requested by SVC			Despite requests, neither supplied to Young or Northern Beached Health Services.	
	JHH: SVC unable to meet supply requests for recommended staff immunisation.						

Adapted from Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) - Clinical Advice. Table 1. Seasonal influenza vaccines available in Australia in 2018, by age. Issued 19th February 2018.

SVC= State Vaccine Centre; TGA = Therapeutics Goods Administration.



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John Hunter Hospital

It has been reported that inconsistent information had been provided by the State Vaccine Centre (SVC). Moreover JHH has been notified that there is insufficient stock available from the SVC to immunize JHH frontline staff as recommended. This is despite the amount of stock necessary to immunize staff being identified by the hospital and early notification being given to the SVC. Storage capacity at JHH necessitates episodic delivery of the vaccines.

Young Health Service

- We ordered >65 stock, but there was a mix up and we received the regular quadrivalent product – twice. To date, I am still waiting for the >65 stock to arrive.
- Initial supply of the staff vaccines was in boxes of 10, not pre-filled and thus suitable for latex allergy, however subsequent “top-up” orders have been sent the pre-filled syringes, which may pose a risk for latex allergic staff (no actual incident to date)
- We have had 2 staff members receive the “staff” vaccines (being the regular quadrivalent), but were >65 years so should have had the >65 trivalent product.
- Anecdotally, I have heard of a community pharmacy giving >65's the regular vaccine, and informing them it was “better”.
- My personal opinion is that vaccines would be better labelled as “2018 influenza vaccine: 65years+”, “2018 influenza vaccine: 6months - 5years”, “2018 influenza vaccine: 5 - 65years” etc.

Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital (BNK)

We've had concerns about all the brands at BNK. We originally got Fluarix and Fluzone only which was fine but now we've been called and SVC want to take our Fluarix back and give us another brand. All very confusing for prescribers and pharmacists. We are very concerned a dispensing error is going to be made. So far we've been extremely vigilant and have avoided errors but looks like it'll get worse with all the brand changing which is outside of our control.

Bowral (SWSLHD)

We have had no issues with substitution. We only stock the Fluad and Fluarix.

Nepean Hospital

- Originally our plan was to stock only the FluQuadri/FluQuadri Junior and Fluad brands. The trivalent vaccines recommended for >65 years to be dispensed only if it is specifically charted by the prescriber.

- We now also have Fluzone (which we have reserved for Mental Health) and Afluria Quad (which was given to replace FluQuadri stock that was taken back by the Ministry).
- As far as I know, all the vaccines come through pharmacy.
- In regards to notification to the immunisation register, I am unaware if this occurs (I checked my record and it hasn't appeared). We've found that the communication is not very good about incoming stock and stock shortages and brand switches. There was initial confusion about the 2 preparations.

Northern Beaches Health Service (NBHS)

Currently Afluria Quad (Quadrivalent vaccine) is available and used for vaccination of all staff. We are awaiting stock to arrive of the trivalent Fluad or Fluzone vaccine for those staff or inpatients greater than 65 years of age who may be prescribed it, but we have not had any access to it thus far this flu season.

As far as we are aware, the vaccines are only coming in via the pharmacy department. Also, in order to provide proof of vaccination, staff are taking a photo of their vaccination consent form containing the vaccine administration details including the batch and expiry of the vaccine used (name of the vaccine not recorded).

St Vincent's Hospital

We are also concerned with the SVC bypassing the Pharmacy department and sending stock directly to different units within hospitals for all the reasons you mention.

Liverpool Hospital

With the Influenza vaccines this year, we placed an initial order of 200 doses of the new "fortified" vaccine for the over 65's and received Fluad mid-April. Then on the following Friday we received the notification about the precaution with severe latex allergy and the fact that we could order the alternate "Fluzone" for patients/staff with severe latex allergy. So we called the State Vaccine centre and they told us that our order this week would be filled with Fluzone and not Fluad. So we tried to tell them that we preferred not to be changing over between the brands as one contains a higher dose and the other contains standard dose plus adjuvant.

Anyway, the bottom line is that they have exhausted all their stocks of Fluad and they are now giving Fluzone until they replenish their stock of Fluad which will be "later in May".

Responses received as at 1st June 2018

Please note that all information and policies are only current at the time the response is sent and individual hospitals should be contacted to ascertain current policies and practices. The responses received are only representative of the hospitals participating in the discussion at the time and do not necessarily indicate a complete picture of current practices. Information sharing occurs on the understanding that due acknowledgement will be given to the original source and that the information will not be quoted or used out of the context of the discussion. Permission should be sought from the original source before any policy, protocol or guideline is used or applied in another setting.