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The American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM), whose membership includes certified nurse-midwives (CNMs®) and certified midwives (CMs®) in the United States, recently conducted a survey of its members on the subject of immunizations. The questions were developed by a committee of staff and CNMs who are ACNM members. The survey was distributed via email in December 2013 to 7,000 ACNM members and about 940 members responded to the survey. Possible influences on the survey results include self-selection (i.e., only those midwives currently aware of the importance of vaccines may have answered the survey).

The results showed that more than 80% of ACNM members who answered the survey **either** screen women (87%), discuss the importance (93%), or provide immunizations (81%). A large majority of ACNM midwives vaccinate their pregnant clients (97%). The immunization most often provided is influenza (95%), followed by Tdap (89%) and HPV (79%). The least often provided immunizations were Zostavax (11%), Meningococcal (12%), Pneumococcal (18%), and Hepatitis A (19%). About a third of ACNM members offer Hepatitis B (35%) and MMR (35%). Rates for vaccinating pregnant women were influenza (97%), Tdap (89%), and Hepatitis B (22%). Approximately 84% of postpartum women are offered vaccines.

The survey found that there is a lack of knowledge about the safety of immunizations (75%), and members needed information that includes talking points to use when discussing vaccines with women (63%), contraindications/indications (62%), updates on the immunization schedule (53%), and the State Immunization Information Systems (50%). Barriers for those not offering immunizations were reimbursement (57%), not enough interested clients (33%), and not enough storage space (38%).

ACNM respondents said that reasons women are not being vaccinated included concern for the safety of the vaccine in pregnancy (85%), concern that the vaccine would give them the disease (68%), unpleasant experience (63%), thinking vaccines are not needed due to the diseases themselves being eliminated (62%), concern for the link to developmental delays (55%), concern for mercury in vaccines (45%), misunderstanding about the mechanism of action of the vaccine (45%), concern over serious adverse events (40%), cost (19%), religious restrictions (11%), true allergy or previous reaction (10%), and inconvenient access (10%).

A large majority of ACNM midwives get their information on immunization from CDC (94%), followed by ACOG (31%), the Journal of Midwifery and Women's Health (20%), and AAP (17%). An interesting finding was that 11% of those surveyed said that they themselves have not received the recommended vaccines for their age group, citing concern over serious adverse reactions (57%) and concern over mercury in vaccines (30%).

For more information, please contact Tina Johnson, ACNM Director of Professional Practice & Health Policy, at 240-485-1840 or tjohnson@acnm.org.

ACNM Immunization Survey

1. Do you screen your clients for their vaccine history?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	87.5%	829
No	12.5%	118
<i>answered question</i>		947
<i>skipped question</i>		3

2. Do you discuss the importance of vaccines with your clients?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	93.1%	881
No	6.9%	65
<i>answered question</i>		946
<i>skipped question</i>		4

3. Do you provide immunizations in your office for your clients?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	81.5%	766
No	18.5%	174
<i>answered question</i>		940
<i>skipped question</i>		10

4. Which ones do you provide? Check all that apply.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Influenza	95.7%	688
HPV	79.1%	569
Tdap	89.3%	642
Hepatitis A	19.6%	141
Hepatitis B	35.3%	254
MMR	35.9%	258
Meningococcal	12.9%	93
Pneumococcal	18.6%	134
Varicella	27.4%	197
Zostavax	11.5%	83
<i>answered question</i>		719
<i>skipped question</i>		231

5. Do you participate in your state's Immunization Information Systems (ISS) tracking program?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	50.2%	335
No	49.8%	332
<i>answered question</i>		667
<i>skipped question</i>		283

6. Do you provide immunizations for your clients who are pregnant?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	97.2%	698
No	2.8%	20
<i>answered question</i>		718
<i>skipped question</i>		232

7. Which vaccines do you provide to your pregnant clients? Check all that apply.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Tdap	89.7%	630
Influenza	97.2%	682
Hepatitis B	22.4%	157
<i>answered question</i>		702
<i>skipped question</i>		248

8. What resources would be helpful to you to increase vaccination rates among your clients? Check all that apply.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Checklist for medical record	46.0%	283
More information on the vaccine schedule	43.4%	267
More information on the indications and contraindications	62.4%	384
More information on safety of immunizations	75.1%	462
Other (please specify)		68
<i>answered question</i>		615
<i>skipped question</i>		335

9. Why do you NOT provide vaccines in your office? Check all that apply.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Concern for safety of vaccines	14.5%	26
Not enough information	2.8%	5

Not enough space for storage of vaccines	38.5%	69
Not enough interest from your patients	33.5%	60
Reimbursement deficiencies	57.5%	103
Lack of trained office staff	6.1%	11
Institutional policies	16.8%	30
Other (please specify)		60
<i>answered question</i>		179
<i>skipped question</i>		771

10. Do you order or provide vaccines for women who are immediately postpartum?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	84.1%	740
No	15.9%	140
<i>answered question</i>		880
<i>skipped question</i>		70

11. Which vaccines do you order or provide? Check all that apply.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
MMR	82.4%	596
Tdap	92.4%	668
Hepatitis A	9.7%	70
Hepatitis B	27.4%	198
HPV	27.5%	199
Influenza	83.5%	604
Meningococcal	6.9%	50
Pneumococcal	18.0%	130
Varicella	32.6%	236
<i>answered question</i>		723
<i>skipped question</i>		227

12. What resources would be helpful for you to be able to provide or increase immunizations for your clients? Check all that apply.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Storage and handling training	16.3%	117
Billing and coding training	33.6%	241
Consent and reporting adverse events training	24.5%	176
Record-keeping training	16.2%	116
Computerized Immunization Information Systems (IIS)	23.8%	171
Training for office staff on administering vaccines	16.3%	117
Talking points for clients	63.6%	457
Information on indications and contraindications	55.0%	395
Updates on the adult immunization schedule	53.1%	381
Client education materials in languages other than	36.4%	261

Other (please specify)	75
<i>answered question</i>	718
<i>skipped question</i>	232

13. What are some of the barriers to your clients' willingness to accept vaccines?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Cost	19.7%	168
Inconvenient access	10.3%	88
Concern that they will get the disease from the vaccine	68.0%	579
Dislike of injections/unpleasant experience	63.1%	537
True allergy or previous reaction to vaccine	10.2%	87
Religious restrictions	11.2%	95
Thinking that vaccines are not needed because their	62.5%	532
Concern for safety in pregnancy	85.5%	728
Concern for link to developmental delays	55.6%	473
Concern over serious adverse reactions	40.7%	346
Concern about mercury in the vaccine	51.0%	434
Misunderstanding about the mechanism of action for	45.4%	386
Other (please specify)		24
<i>answered question</i>		851
<i>skipped question</i>		99

14. Where do you go for the latest information about vaccines? Check all that apply.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
ACOG	31.1%	265
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	96.4%	821
Journal of Midwifery and Women's Health	20.3%	173
ACNM's Quick eNews	8.5%	72
Immunization Action Coalition	5.5%	47
AWHONN	3.6%	31
American Academy of Pediatrics	17.3%	147
<i>answered question</i>		852
<i>skipped question</i>		98

15. Have you received the recommended vaccines for your age group?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	88.9%	766
No	11.1%	96
<i>answered question</i>		862
<i>skipped question</i>		88

16. Why not?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Cost	7.9%	5
Inconvenient access	15.9%	10
Dislike of injections/unpleasant experience	15.9%	10
True allergy or previous reaction to vaccine	15.9%	10
Religious restrictions	9.5%	6
Concern over serious adverse reactions	57.1%	36
Concern about mercury in the vaccine	30.2%	19
Other (please specify)		43
	<i>answered question</i>	63
	<i>skipped question</i>	887