



IDRS

Illicit Drug
Reporting System

How can we increase influenza vaccination among people who inject drugs?

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UNSW
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NDARC
National Drug &
Alcohol Research Centre

NDRI
national drug research institute



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Disclosure of interests

I have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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Motivations for the study

Why influenza?

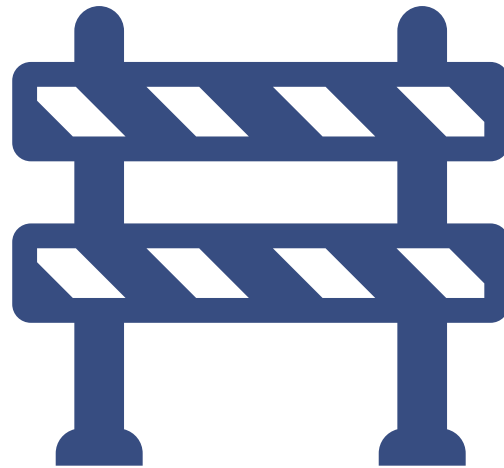
- Influenza is the greatest contributor to vaccine-preventable disease burden in Australia*
- People who inject drugs may experience more severe health outcomes due to prevalence of underlying conditions
- Annual vaccination is the most practical means to prevent influenza infection
- People who inject drugs may be less likely to access the influenza vaccine
- But we have very little data!

Objectives

- In a sample of people who inject drugs...



How many had received an influenza vaccination in the past year?



What were the barriers to influenza vaccination?

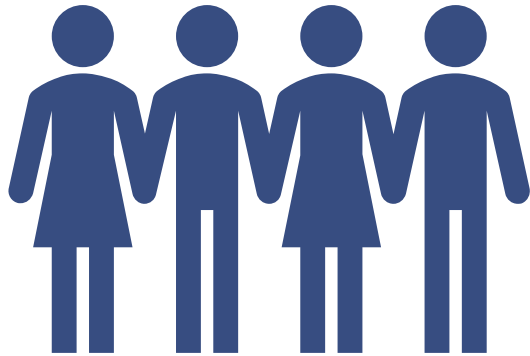


What were the differences in characteristics between those who did and did not get vaccinated?

The study population

Illicit Drug Reporting System (IDRS)

- Annual surveys with people from each capital city of Australia who...



Are at least 18 years of age



Have injected illicit or non-prescribed drugs at least monthly in the past 6 months



Have resided in an Australian capital city for 10 of the past 12 months

Illicit Drug Reporting System

- Recruited via



Needle syringe programs



Treatment services



Word-of-mouth

We recruited 884 participants in 2020

- A typical 2020 participant

Identified as male

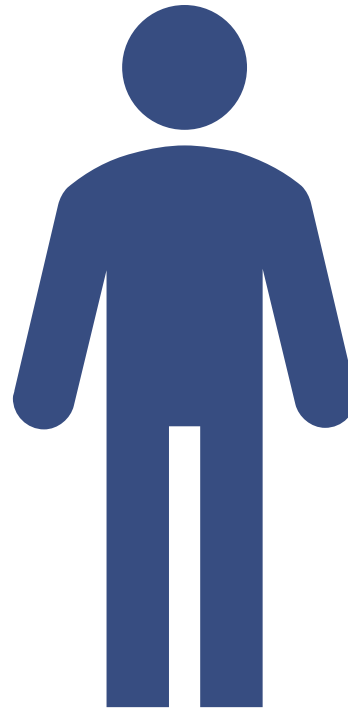
Unemployed

44 years old

Resided in stable housing

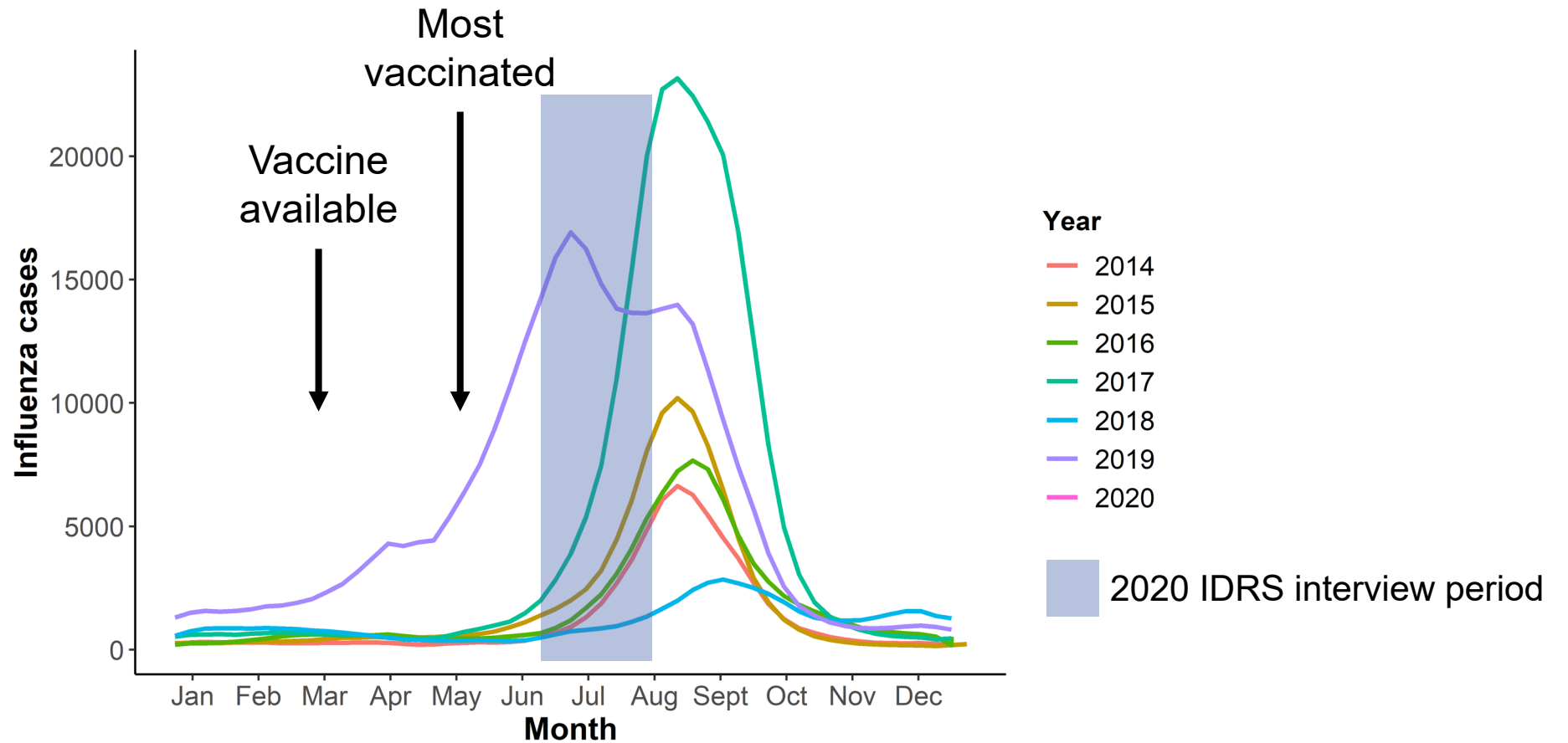
Not ATSI

Injected heroin or methamphetamine
most often in past month



~half in drug treatment

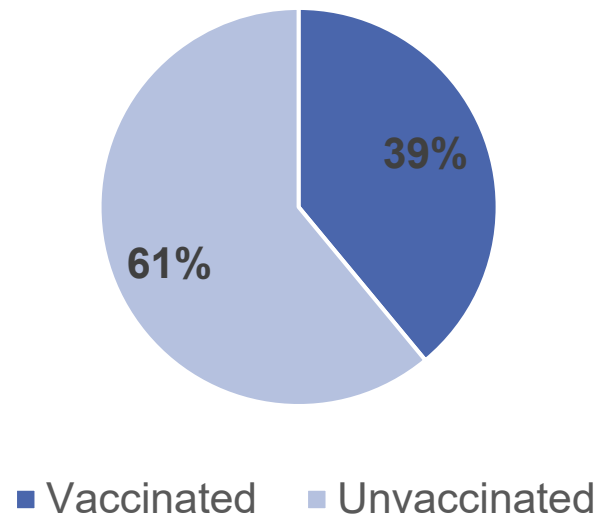
Timeline



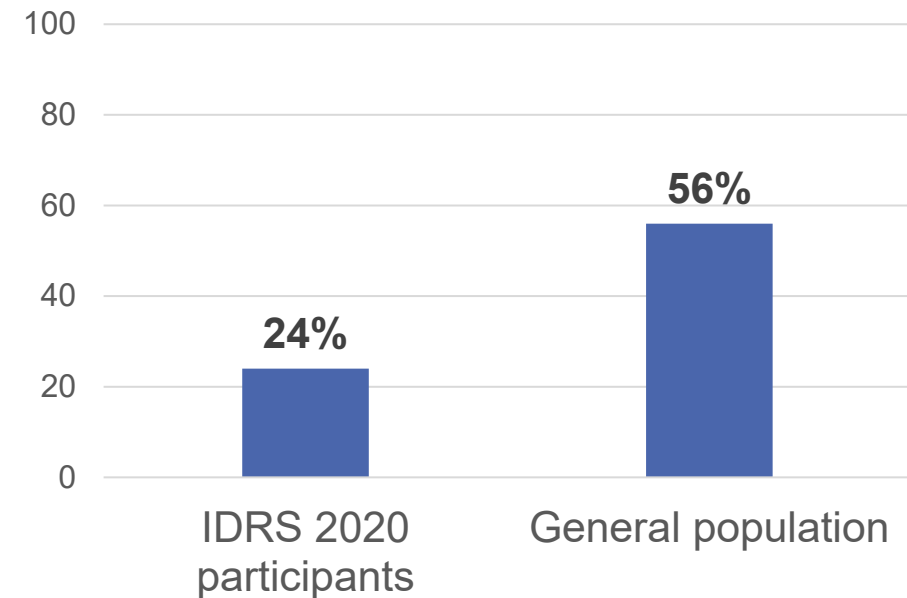
Results

Vaccine uptake among people who inject drugs was lower than that of the general population

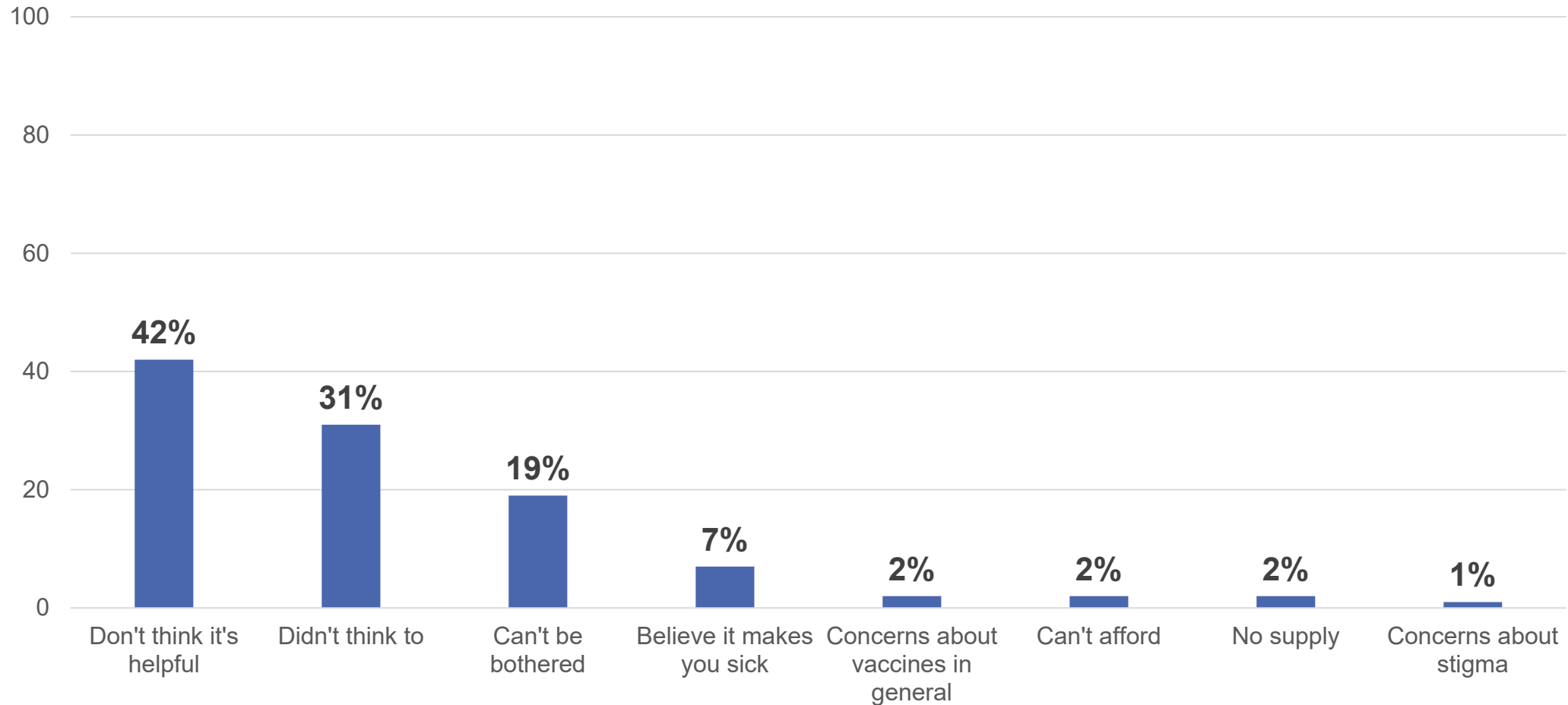
Past year influenza vaccination in the 2020 IDRS sample



Current influenza season vaccination

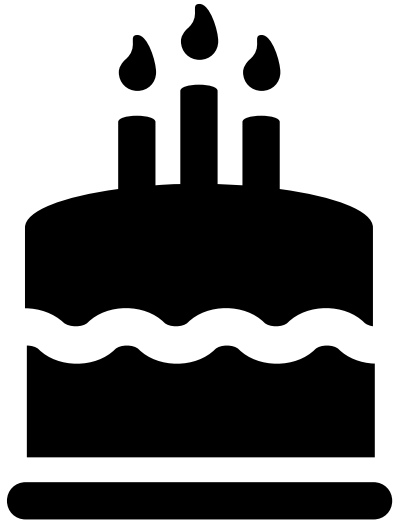


Barriers to vaccination were predominantly psychological rather than structural



Characteristics of vaccinated and unvaccinated participants were mostly similar

- However, participants who reported a current season vaccination were



More likely to be older



More likely to report past 6
month opioid agonist
treatment



Less likely to live in Adelaide or
Brisbane (relative to Sydney)

How can we increase influenza vaccination
among people who inject drugs?

Maximising uptake

- Provision of vaccine at services people who inject drugs intersect with
 - Remove motivation barrier
 - A study¹ in Melbourne reported high rates of vaccine uptake and acceptability after deploying outreach van to needle syringe programs and homeless shelters
- Focus education on vaccine utility
- Annual vaccination requirement – interventions need to take this into account
- Implications of our recruitment strategy – what about people who don't live in capital cities or engage with services?

Summary

- People who inject drugs were less likely to be vaccinated for the current influenza season compared to the general population
- Barriers to vaccination mostly related to low risk perception of disease and motivation
- People who had recently received opioid agonist therapy were more likely to be vaccinated
- Providing influenza vaccinations at services people who inject drugs intersect with may increase vaccine uptake

Interested in more information?

You can send me an email! o.price@unsw.edu.au

You can sign up to our monthly Drug Trends newsletter!

You can read more in Drug and Alcohol Dependence!



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Short communication

Uptake, barriers and correlates of influenza vaccination among people who inject drugs in Australia

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Thanks for watching!
