

Factors that influenced the mpox vaccination rollout among GBMSM in NSW

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Background:

In 2022, a global outbreak of mpox developed, predominantly among gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (GBMSM). In response to cases emerging in NSW, a phased smallpox vaccination rollout commenced in August 2022. We describe NSW Health's targeted vaccination strategy, factors that influenced the rollout and uptake of JYNNEOS[®] vaccine.

Approach:

A global shortage of JYNNEOS[®] vaccine meant NSW Health could secure only a small amount of vaccine for the initial rollout. It was estimated approximately 45,000 doses of JYNNEOS[®] (in a two-dose schedule) would be required to vaccinate those at highest-risk of acquiring mpox, including MSM on pre-exposure prophylaxis for HIV, sexually active GBMSM who are immunocompromised including those living with HIV and GBMSM with planned travel to MSM events overseas. Five vaccination clinics in the Sydney metropolitan were established. Through September to November, additional vaccine was acquired, clinics transitioned to intradermal vaccination for dose saving, and a state-wide booking system coupled with relaxed vaccination criteria enabled GBMSM populations to access the vaccine across an expanded list of sites in regional/rural NSW.

Outcomes/Impact:

Up to 27 March 2023, NSW clinics administered 33,951 doses of JYNNEOS[®]. Several barriers were encountered including rollout of an unlicensed product, inability to move vaccine between clinics, storage, packaging and shelf life of the vaccine, patient consent, reporting requirements and the need for a skilled workforce to administer vaccine intradermally.

Innovation and Significance:

Operational aspects of the rollout were highly successful, largely attributable to the collaborative approach between NSW Ministry of Health, Sexual Health Clinics and ACON. Whilst initial demand for the vaccine was strong, vaccine uptake slowed in the lead up and during Sydney WorldPride despite increased risk of mpox importation from overseas travellers. A global decline in mpox cases notified in the later months of 2022 and behaviour modification likely contributed to the perceived diminished risk of mpox transmission.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

None