

Healthy doctors make healthy patients, study finds

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Patients are more likely to follow preventive health practices like getting a flu shot or mammography if their doctors do likewise, researchers at the University of British Columbia and in Israel have discovered.

"We found that patients whose physicians adhered to the recommended screening or vaccination practices were significantly more likely to also undergo screening or vaccination compared with patients of non-compliant physicians," said Dr. Erica Frank of UBC's School of Population and Public Health.

Dr. Frank worked with three Israeli researchers and their findings are published in the April 8 edition of the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*.

Researchers looked at the screening and vaccination practices of 1,488 physicians and their almost 1.9 million [adult patients](#) in Israel's largest health care organization, Clalit Health Services (CHS). Practices included mammography, [blood pressure measurement](#), colorectal screening, annual influenza vaccinations and others.

Dr. Frank noted that 49 per cent of patients of physicians who received a [flu shot](#) also received the vaccine compared with 43 per cent of patients whose physicians did not receive the vaccine.

The study also highlighted that doctors could improve their personal screening and vaccination practices.

"While physicians' [health habits](#) are generally exemplary, doctors could improve some of their personal screening and vaccination practices, which should improve the health practices of their patients." Dr. Frank said.

The researchers recommended that hospitals and medical schools develop programs for physician health promotion in order to encourage a healthy doctor-healthy patient relationship.

More information: www.cmaj.ca/lookup/doi/10.1503/cmaj.121028

Provided by University of British Columbia

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