

Advocacy, race affect flu vaccination rates, study finds

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A doctor's recommendation and a patient's race may influence flu vaccination rates, according to researchers at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit.

Researchers found that 90 percent of patients received vaccination if their physician advocated for it compared to 58 percent of patients whose [physician](#) did not.

Vaccination rates were also higher in whites (93 percent) and Asians (84 percent) than African Americans (62 percent), researchers say, theorizing that African Americans might not trust the vaccination's benefit.

Additionally, [vaccination rates](#) were four times higher among patients who believed vaccination protected them than those who thought otherwise.

Adverse reactions to vaccination like soreness at the injection site or fever did not significantly affect vaccination rates, researchers say.

The study will be presented at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology in Houston.

"What our findings show is that we need to improve our communications between physicians and patients about the benefits of the [flu vaccination](#)," says Melissa Skupin, M.D., a Henry Ford fellow and the study's lead

author.

"Our study showed the benefit of physicians who take a proactive approach in recommending vaccination to their patients. At the same time, we need to re-think our strategy for addressing the perceptions and myths associated with vaccination. The misinformation out there is pervasive."

For their study, researchers sought to identify factors associated with receiving vaccination and how to improve vaccination rates. They distributed a voluntary, anonymous survey at six Henry Ford Internal Medicine and Allergy clinics in metro Detroit between April and August 2013. The 10-question survey asked patients 18 and older if they received a flu vaccination the previous year, their perceptions of vaccination and demographic information.

Of 1,200 surveys distributed, 472 were returned completed to researchers. Data was analyzed using chi-square tests.

Provided by Henry Ford Health System

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