



Influenza Vaccination During Pregnancy: A Descriptive Cross-sectional Survey of the Knowledge, Beliefs, and Attitudes of Mexican Gynecologists and Family Physicians.

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BACKGROUND

Influenza in pregnancy is associated with elevated morbidity and mortality. Influenza vaccines are both safe and effective in pregnancy, supporting routine use in this population. Even though influenza vaccination in Mexico is recommended for pregnant women, there are no publications of influenza vaccine coverage in pregnancy.

This is the first Latin American survey done only in physicians aiming to assess the knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes that Obstetrics-Gynecologists (OBGs) and Family Physicians (FPs) have towards influenza and influenza immunization during pregnancy.

METHODS

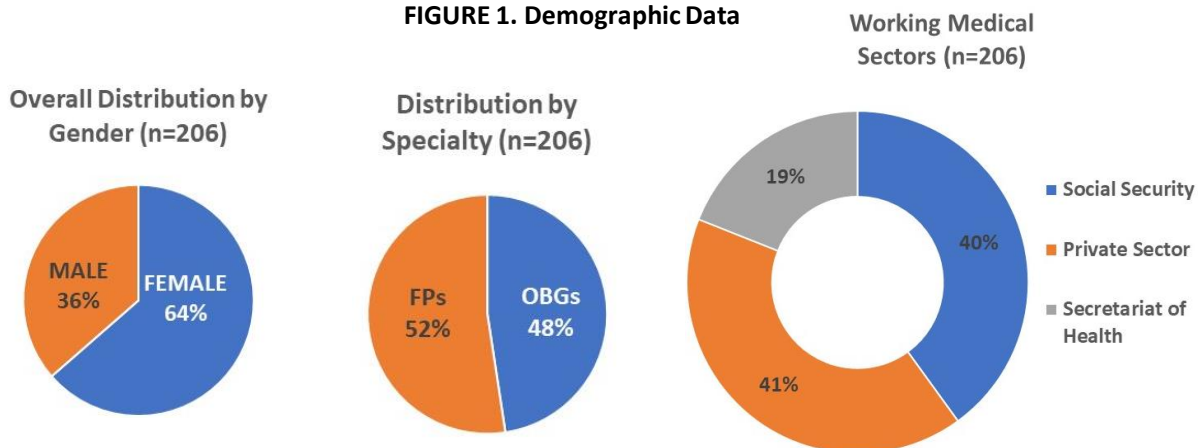
A cross-sectional survey was conducted, both paper-based and online. The questionnaire was composed of 35 questions, which addressed general knowledge of influenza, recommendations for vaccination during pregnancy, and beliefs and attitudes concerning the acceptability of the vaccine in pregnant women.

An Odds Ratio (OR) was calculated for all questions to evaluate if there were any significant statistical differences between OBGs and FPs.

RESULTS

A total of 206 completed surveys were available for analysis, 98 (47.6%) from OBGs, 108 (52.4%) from FPs. Regarding current practicing medical institutions, 76 (37%), 69 (34%), 31 (14.5%), 30 (14.5%) reported working for the Mexican Institute of Social Security, Private Sector, Secretariat of Health, or a combination of all, respectively, representing an estimated 2,472 daily pregnancy consultations.

FIGURE 1. Demographic Data

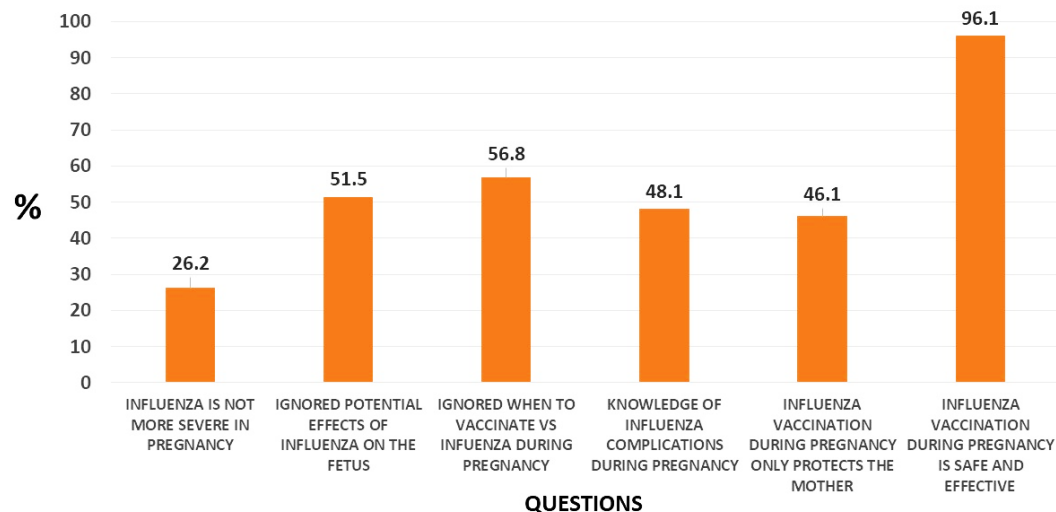


About a quarter (26.2%) reported not having a notion that influenza is more severe among pregnant women. More than half (51.5%) ignored the potential side effects of influenza infection on the fetus. The majority (56.8%) did not know when vaccination during pregnancy should occur.

Pregnancy as a risk factor for developing influenza complications was known only in 48.1%. Also, 46.1% believed that vaccination only confers protection to the mother, but not to the fetus. Nevertheless, 96.1% considered that immunization against influenza during pregnancy is a safe and effective preventive intervention. A results' summary is shown in Figure-2.

No significant statistical differences were observed among both specialties.

FIGURE 2. SUMMARY OF SURVEY'S RESULTS (%) DONE IN 206 MEXICAN OBGs AND FPs



CONCLUSION

Based on this survey, current knowledge of OBGs and FPs for both influenza morbidity and mortality during pregnancy, and the importance of influenza vaccination in this high-risk population, is suboptimal.

Mandatory recommendations to educate medical providers regarding influenza vaccination during pregnancy in Mexico are necessary, even as imperative for CME credits.

We strongly recommend that besides the creation of training programs for all health care providers, it is mandatory to continuously monitor the development and success of such programs to determine whether it is working or not.