

INTRODUCTION

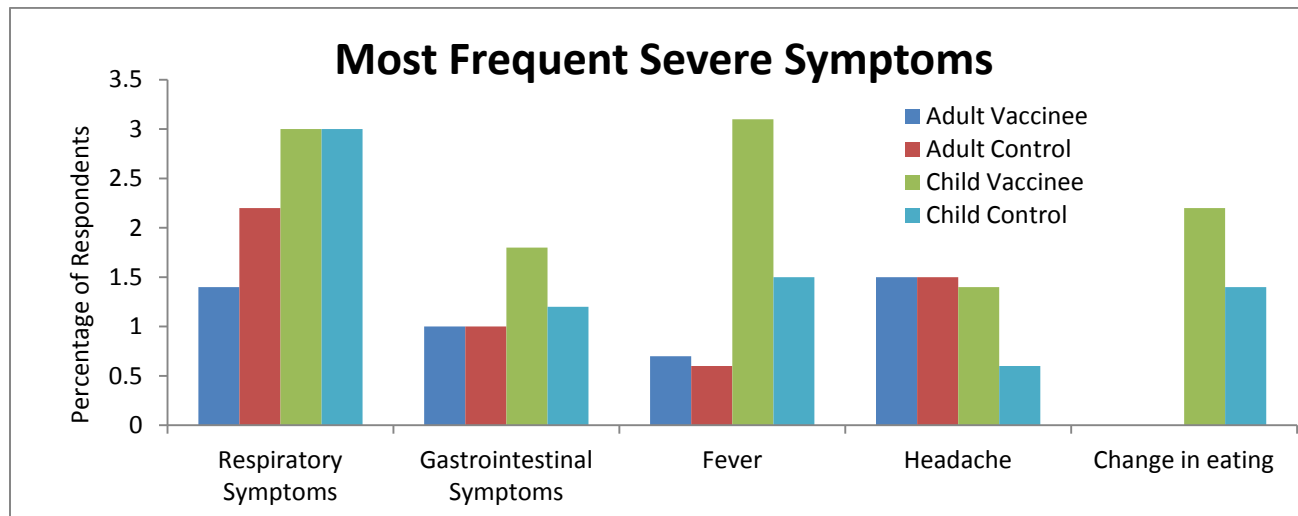
Adults and children are immunized each year to protect them from influenza (flu) and to keep them from passing it to others. Since 2009, adverse events (side effects) after the flu shot have been monitored with an electronic survey (the flu vaccine safety study). This report summarizes the 2014 results of the flu vaccine safety survey, which was part of Canada's flu vaccine safety monitoring.

METHODS

In the fall of 2014 adults and parents of children who received the flu shot were invited to take part in the flu vaccine safety study. Participants who provided consent and their email address were asked to complete a short electronic survey 8 days after their and/or their child(ren)'s flu shot. The main outcome was the frequency of any new health problems or the worsening of any existing health conditions that were severe enough to prevent normal daily activities or to require a health care visit. We compared the frequency of health events in vaccinated adults and children to the frequency of health events in an unimmunized group of adults and children just before the vaccination campaign began (control group).

RESULTS

Among the 23,803 adults and parents of immunized children that were recruited, 14,269 (60%) responded to the survey. Most participants did not report any health events after the flu shot. A total of 3.4% of vaccinated participants reported a health problem severe enough to prevent their or their child's normal daily activities and/or that caused them to seek medical care compared with 3.6% of unvaccinated participants. The table below illustrates the most common symptoms reported in vaccinated and unvaccinated participants. Among adults no differences were reported in the frequency of symptoms between in those vaccinated and those not vaccinated. In children, gastrointestinal symptoms, fever, headache and changes in eating were reported more often in vaccinees. No unexpected side effects were observed in adults or children.



CONCLUSIONS

We observed no unexpected side effects in adults and children following the 2014 seasonal vaccines.

There is still one survey left to complete for this study. You will receive it about 2 weeks before the flu immunization program starts. This survey will capture health events that occur in adults and children before they get the flu shot in 2015. This will tell us how often common health events occur, such as colds and fever.

The flu vaccine safety study is part of the annual monitoring of the safety of the influenza vaccine. We will continue the study this fall (2015). If you are interested in participating again this year you can sign up when you get your flu shot.

Thank you for your participation!