

Seasonal influenza vaccine uptake in older people in Ireland, September-November 2016

Introduction

Influenza vaccination (both vaccine and administration) is free for all medical cardholders and GP visit cardholders in Ireland. From mid-2001 to the end of 2008, all individuals aged 70 years and older were eligible for a medical card. Since 1st January 2009, automatic entitlement to a medical card for the over 70s no longer applied. All those aged over 70 who applied for a medical card were subject to a means test based on income. GP visit cards have been available since mid-2006. From 5th August 2015 everyone aged 70 or over, ordinarily resident in Ireland, is eligible for free GP care regardless of income again. All people aged 70 or over who do not have a Medical Card or GP Visit card can register to access this service.

This report analyses data obtained from the Primary Care Reimbursement Service (PCRS), HSE-Finance Shared Services on the number of registered medical cardholders and GP visit cardholders aged 65 years and older, as well as the number of patients vaccinated with influenza vaccine (by age group and HSE, CHO and LHO Area). Data refers to GP returns received by the PCRS during the months September-November 2016. Influenza uptake rates by age group and HSE/CHO/LHO area were calculated based on the median of registered patients with medical cards and GP visit cards during this time period. Please note that figures are dependent on GPs' claims for reimbursement and are **provisional data only**.

Results

The average uptake for influenza vaccination nationally during the period September-November 2016 in those aged 65 years and older was **50.2%**. This uptake rate is slightly less than the same period for the 2015/16 season (51.7%) and is also slightly below average (52.9%) for 2004/05-2015/16 (table 1). Variation in vaccination coverage was observed between age groups, with the highest uptake (55.2%) in those aged 75 years or older (table 2). Variation in vaccination coverage was also observed between HSE areas, ranging from 40.7% in HSE-NW to 54.8% in HSE-SE (figure 1). The variation in uptake between HSE/CHO/LHO areas and different age groups are presented in figures 1a, 2, 2a and 3.

Table 1: Cumulative percentage seasonal influenza vaccine uptake in card holders[†] aged 65 years and older by season, Ireland, September-November 2016

September - November	16/17	15/16	14/15 [*]	13/14	12/13	11/12	10/11	09/10	08/09	07/08	06/07	05/06	04/05
No. vaccinated	265248	260063	NA	255549	240204	239269	226225	202602	226801	217293	216304	221714	199050
No. card holders [†]	527906	502991	NA	452781	453293	439907	428102	414370	425982	416412	402387	392383	382339
% Uptake	50.2	51.7	NA	56.4	53.0	54.4	52.8	48.9	53.2	52.2	53.8	56.5	52.1

^{*}Data for September-November 2014/15 season not available

[†] The number of card holders includes GP visit and medical card holders and represents number of card holders in September-November 2016.

Table 2: Cumulative percentage seasonal influenza vaccine uptake in card holders[†] by age group (in years), Ireland, September-November 2016

Age group (years)	≥65	≥70	≥75	70-74	65-69	65-74
Number vaccinated	265248	222957	148974	73983	42291	116274
Median number card holders*	527906	425021	269957	155064	102885	257949
% Uptake	50.2	52.5	55.2	47.7	41.1	45.1

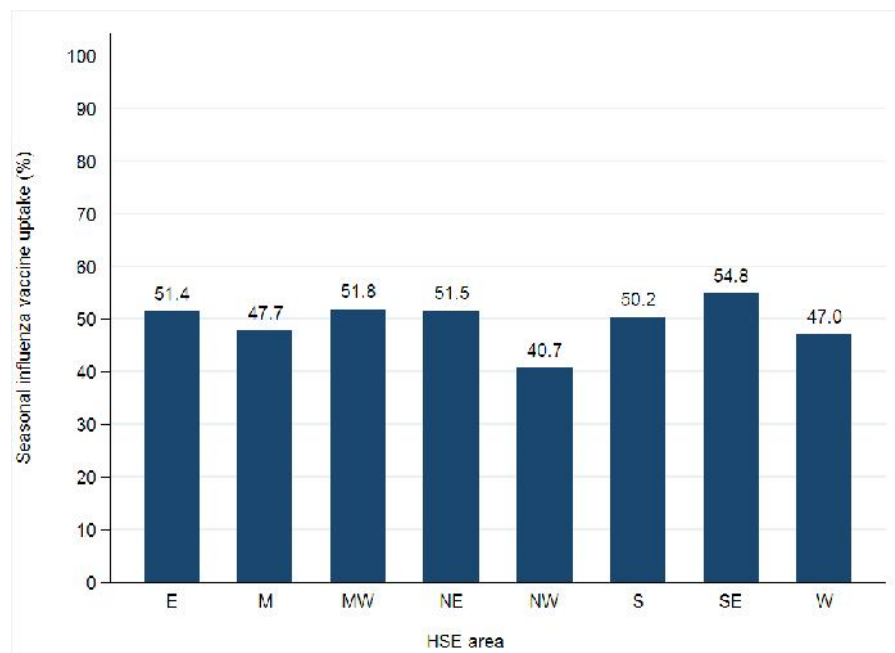


Figure 1: Cumulative percentage seasonal influenza vaccine uptake in card holders[†] aged 65 years and older by HSE-Area attending GP and pharmacies, Ireland, September-November 2016.

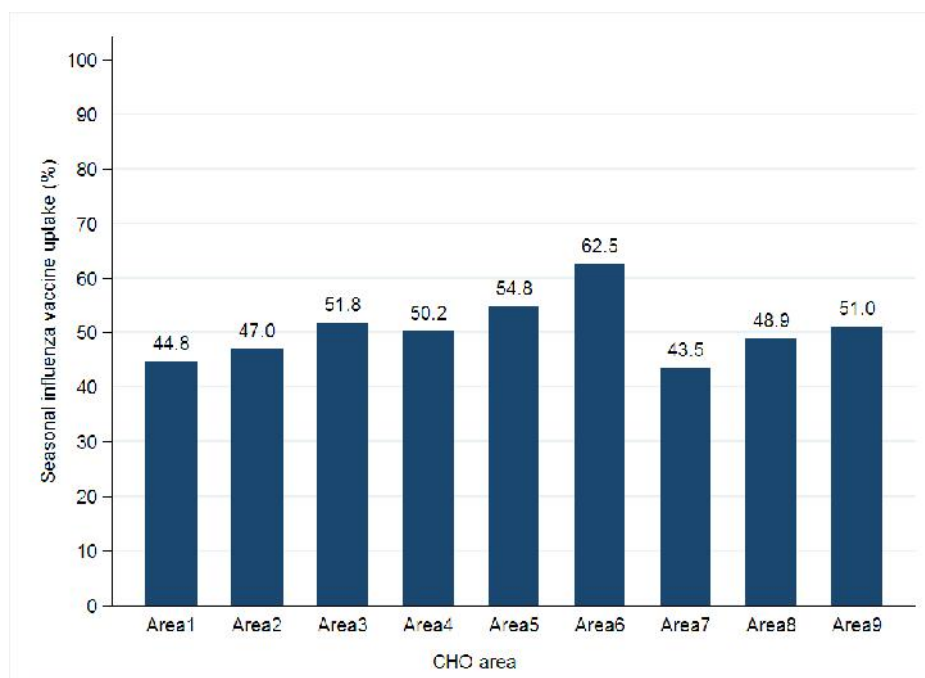


Figure 1a: Cumulative percentage seasonal influenza vaccine uptake in card holders[†] aged 65 years and older, by CHO-Area attending GPs and pharmacies, Ireland, September-November 2016.

[†] The number of card holders includes GP visit and medical card holders and represents number of card holders in September-November 2016.

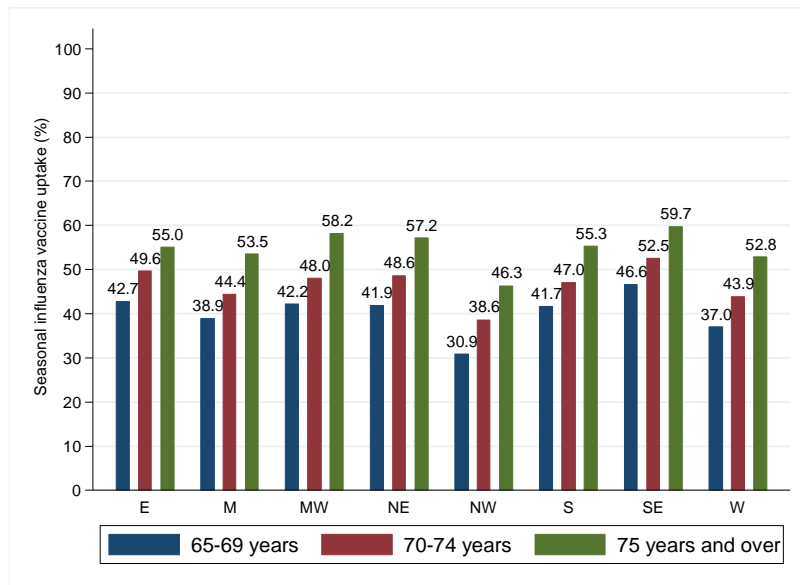


Figure 2: Cumulative percentage seasonal influenza vaccine uptake in card holders[†] by age group, by HSE-Area attending GPs and pharmacies, Ireland, September-November 2016.

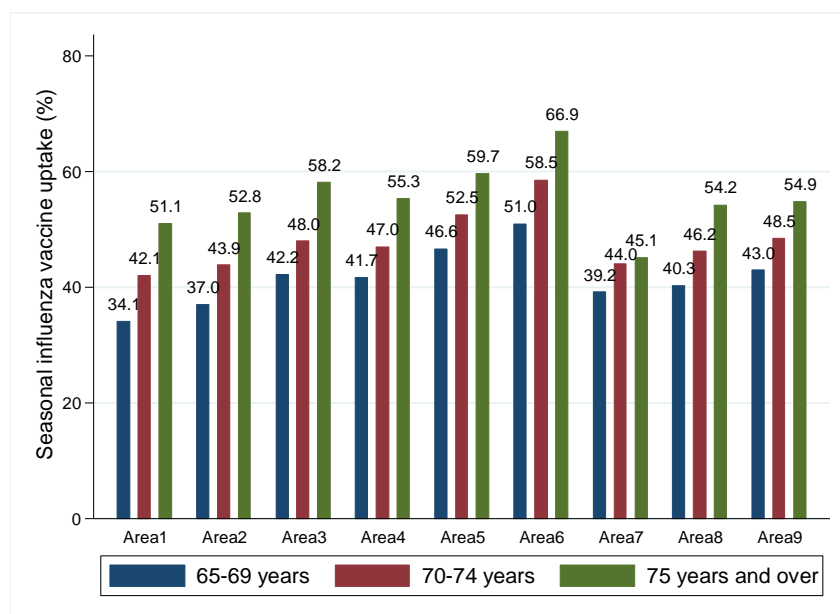


Figure 2a: Cumulative percentage seasonal influenza vaccine uptake in card holders[†] by age group, by CHO-Area attending GPs and pharmacies, Ireland, September-November 2016

[†] The number of card holders includes GP visit and medical card holders and represents number of card holders in September-November 2016.

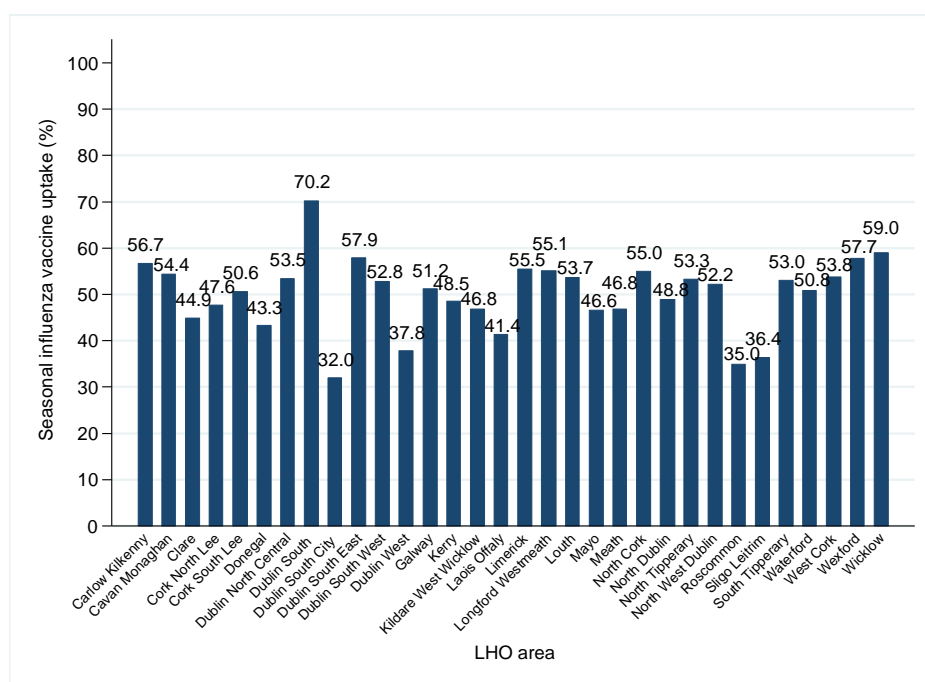


Figure 3: Cumulative percentage seasonal influenza vaccine uptake in card holders[†] aged 65 years and older attending GPs and pharmacies by LHO Area, Ireland, September-November 2016

[†] The number of card holders includes GP visit and medical card holders and represents number of card holders in September-November 2016.