

Seasonal influenza vaccine uptake in older people in Ireland, September 2016 - March 2017

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 March 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 2016-March 2017. 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 September 2016-December 2016. 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 2016-March 2017 in those aged 65 years and older was **54.5%**. This uptake rate is slightly higher as for the same period in the 2015/16 season (54.4%) and is below the average (57.8%) for 2004/05-2015/16 (table 1). Variation in vaccination coverage was observed between age groups, with the highest uptake (59.0%) in those aged 75 years or older (table 2). Variation in vaccination coverage was also observed between HSE areas, ranging from 45.2% in HSE-NW to 59.4% 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 2016-March 2017

September - March	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	287855	279525		268657	256916	249731	258113	214366	245579	238543	243336	245626	233310
No. card holders [†]	528550	513853		452931	453419	439980	430410	416067	424902	417795	404196	394076	383205
% Uptake	54.5	54.4		59.3	56.7	56.8	60.0	51.5	57.8	57.1	60.2	62.3	60.9

*Data for September 2014-March 2015 season not available

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

Table 2: Cumulative percentage seasonal influenza vaccine uptake in card holders[†] by age group (in years), Ireland, September 2016-March 2017

Age group (years)	≥65	≥70	≥75	70-74	65-69	65-74
Number vaccinated	287855	241005	159354	81651	46850	128501
Median number card holders*	528550	425661	270265	155396	102874	258285
% Uptake	54.5	56.6	59.0	52.5	45.5	49.8

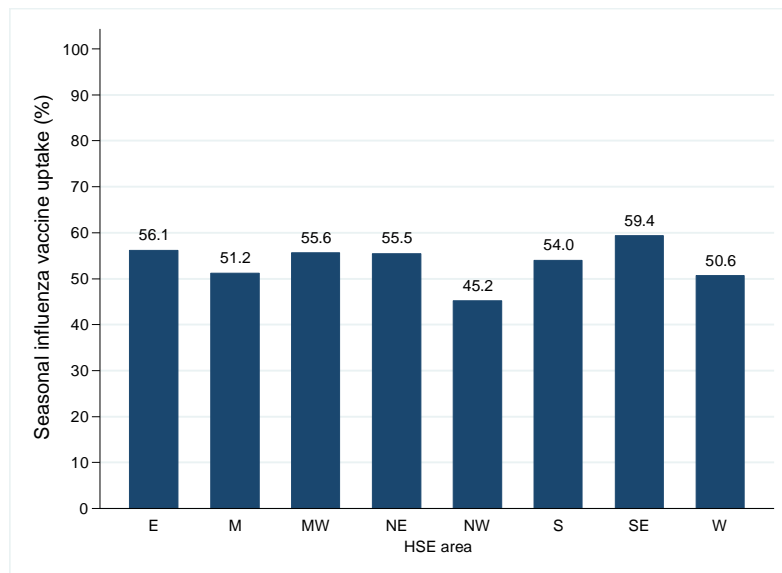


Figure 1: Cumulative percentage seasonal influenza vaccine uptake in card holders[†] aged 65 years and older by HSE-Area attending GP and pharmacies, Ireland, September 2016-March 2017

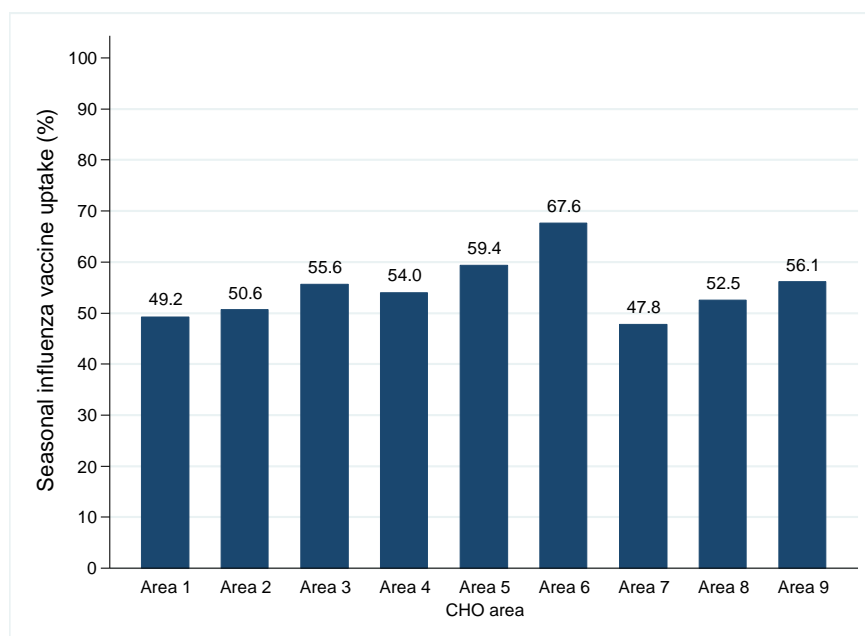


Figure 1a: Cumulative percentage seasonal influenza vaccine uptake in card holders[†] aged 65 years and older, by CHO-Area attending GPs and pharmacies, Ireland, September 2016-March 2017

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

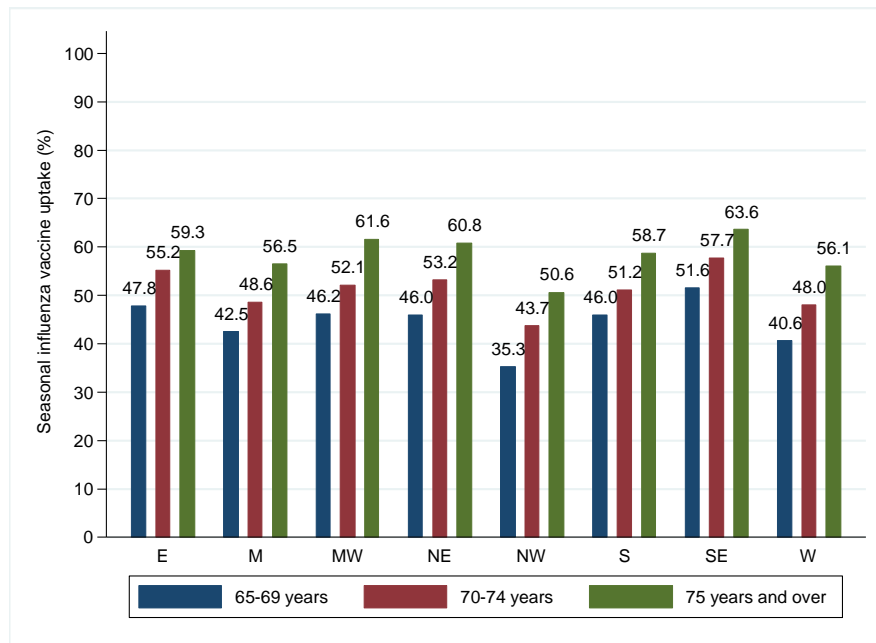


Figure 2: Cumulative percentage seasonal influenza vaccine uptake in card holders[†] by age group, by HSE-Area attending GPs and pharmacies, Ireland, September 2016-March 2017.

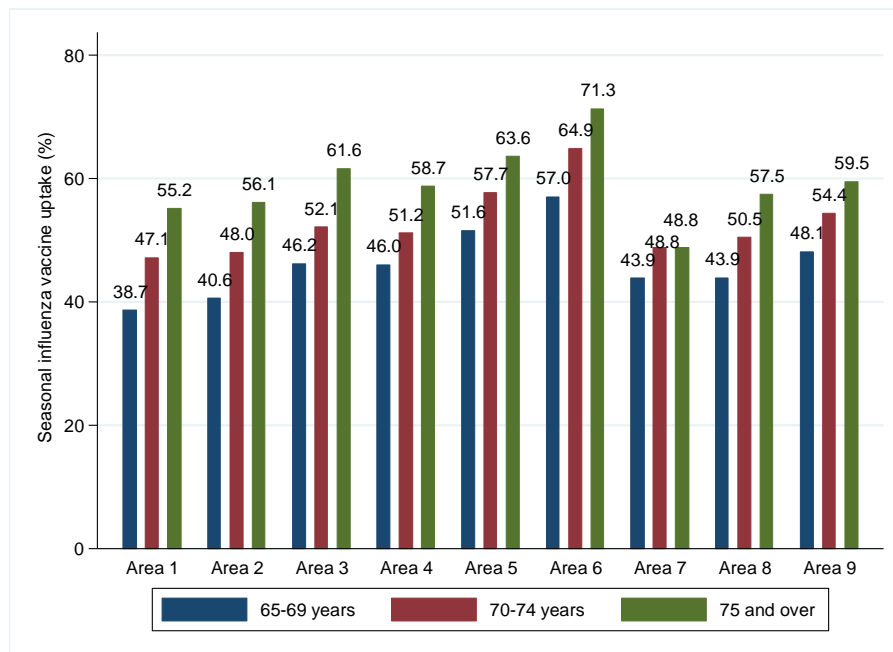


Figure 2a: Cumulative percentage seasonal influenza vaccine uptake in card holders[†] by age group, by CHO-Area attending GPs and pharmacies, Ireland, September 2016-March 2017

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

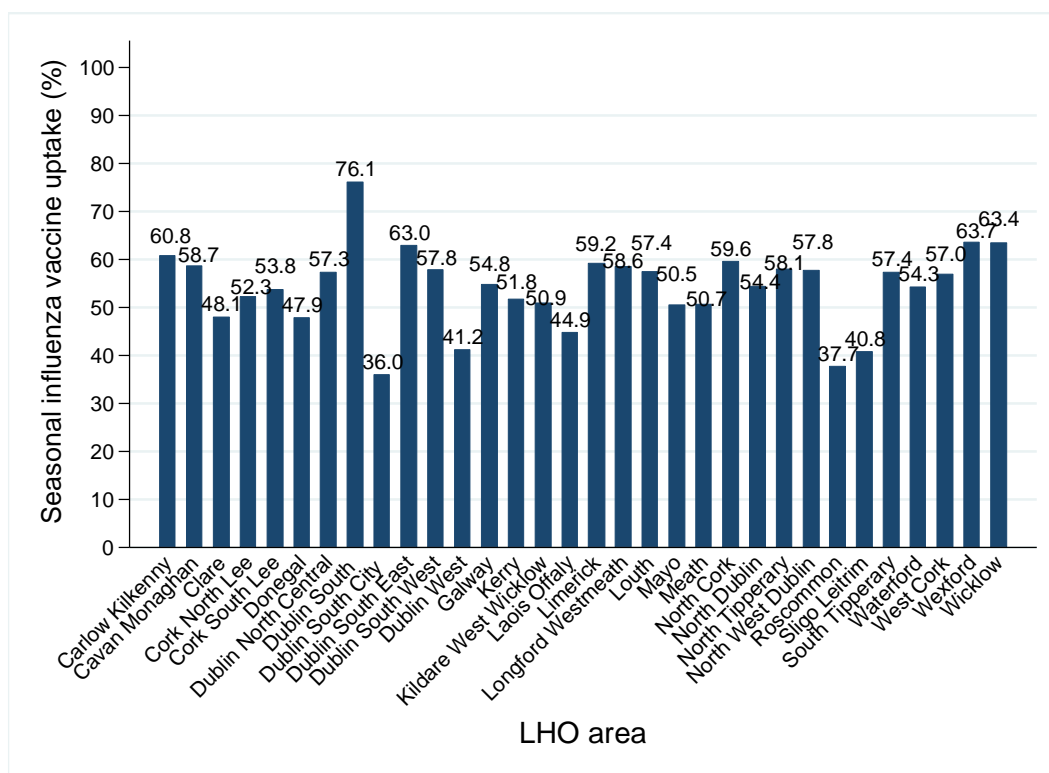


Figure 3: Cumulative percentage seasonal influenza vaccine uptake in card holders[†] aged 65 years and older attending GPs and pharmacies by LHO Area, Ireland, September 2016-March 2017

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