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Intention to get swine flu vaccine A problem limiting the success of swine flu vaccination programs?

The new emerging swine flu is a current problematic infectious disease of epidemic proportions. The recent development of swine flu vaccine provides hopes for the control of this disease. Based on the present pandemic, it is recommended that swine flu vaccination should be used in countries where the problem of swine flu has been identified.¹ In Thailand, a new policy to give free swine flu vaccine to the populations at risk has been introduced. This brief communication presents the author's experience on the intention to get swine flu vaccine from a primary care center taking care of about 7,500 people. After identification of high risk subjects, 456 subjects were identified for inclusion in the swine flu vaccination program. After making appointments for these subjects to get free vaccination only 154 (33.8%) visited to the center to be given the vaccine. Their history showed that all had received the classical influenza vaccination in the previous free campaign. It should be noted that the rate of vaccination coverage with the swine flu vaccine is not satisfactory. The subjects that accepted the swine flu vaccine were the group with good compliance to a previous campaign on classical influenza vaccination. It can be seen that the subjects who had presented poor compliance with the previous classical vaccination program continued to present poor

compliance with the new swine flu vaccination program. Since swine flu vaccine is a new vaccine that is provided free and there is no coercion for the high risk subjects to get the vaccine, the problem of the lack of intention of the subjects to get the vaccine is of great concern for the success of the vaccination program.² The exact cause of poor compliance in the present setting should be further studied. Recently, Setbon et al proposed that "the factors found to predict vaccination intention and their distribution are assumed to be a consequence of the fact that people perceive the risk of swine flu to be similar to that of seasonal flu."² However, this might not be the case in this particular setting, since the subjects who neglected to receive the swine flu vaccination were those who had also previously neglected classical influenza vaccination.

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References

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