

VACCINATION RATES AND UPTAKE IN NEW REFERRALS TO GALWAY UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL HIV CLINIC

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Introduction

The prevalence of HIV in Ireland is approximately 10 per 100,000. Rates of HIV diagnoses are increasing, with the largest number to date recorded in 2022 due to increased screening in the post-pandemic period and inward migration of people living with HIV (PLWH), particularly from Ukraine. Numbers attending our clinic have increased by 32 % over the last 12 months.

PLWH may experience increased risk of infection and more severe morbidity following exposure to vaccine-preventable diseases compared with HIV uninfected individuals. Vaccination rates vary internationally, and of note, vaccination uptake in the general Ukrainian population being amongst the lowest in Europe.

Aims

We aimed to assess vaccine uptake rates and documentation of vaccine status in our population living with HIV at a tertiary referral centre in accordance with the National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC) guidance on Immunisation of Immunocompromised Persons.

Methods

105 individuals were referred during this period with 98 being included in the study. 7 patients were excluded due to their medical notes not being available at the time of audit. Information was obtained via Evolve (electronic medical record) and paper medical records.

Results

98 new referrals to the HIV service in 2022 were included; the median age was 41 (IQR 34-45.75), 60.2% were male, 73.5% heterosexual. Median CD4 count was 705.5 (IQR 443 – 1031) and 74.5% were virally suppressed.

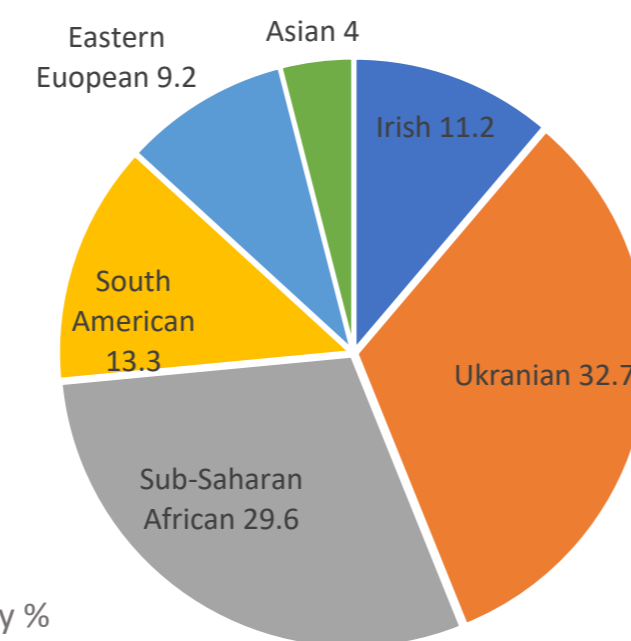
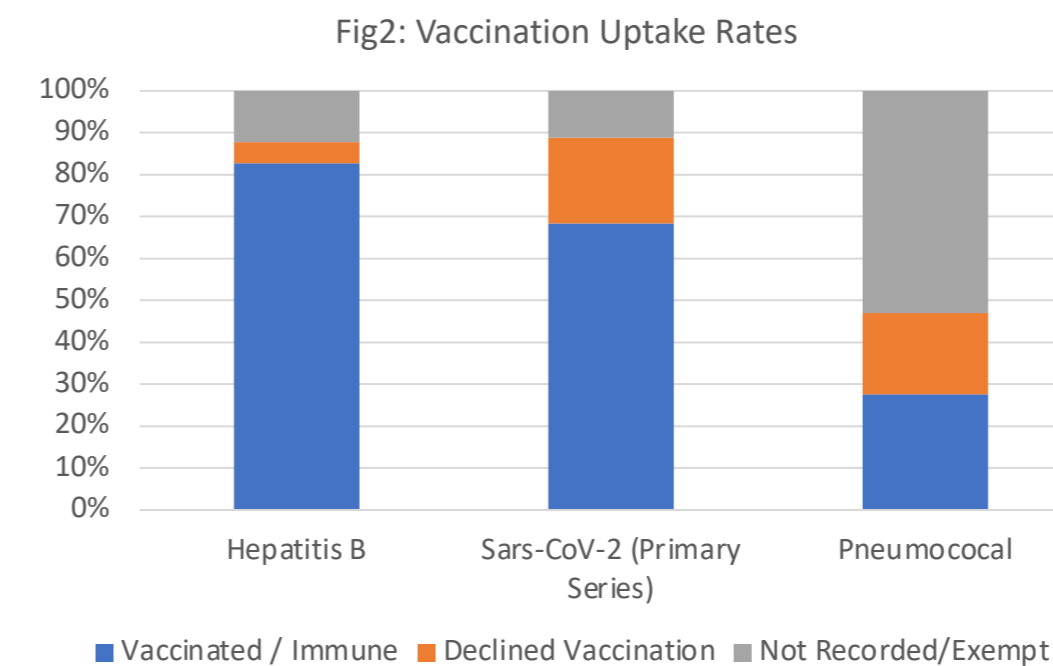


Fig1: Nationality by %

82.7% were immune to Hepatitis B, with 35.8% having serology consistent with previous infection. 7.14% were non-immune to Hepatitis B, of which 77.7% declined vaccination. Status of 10.2% was not assessed

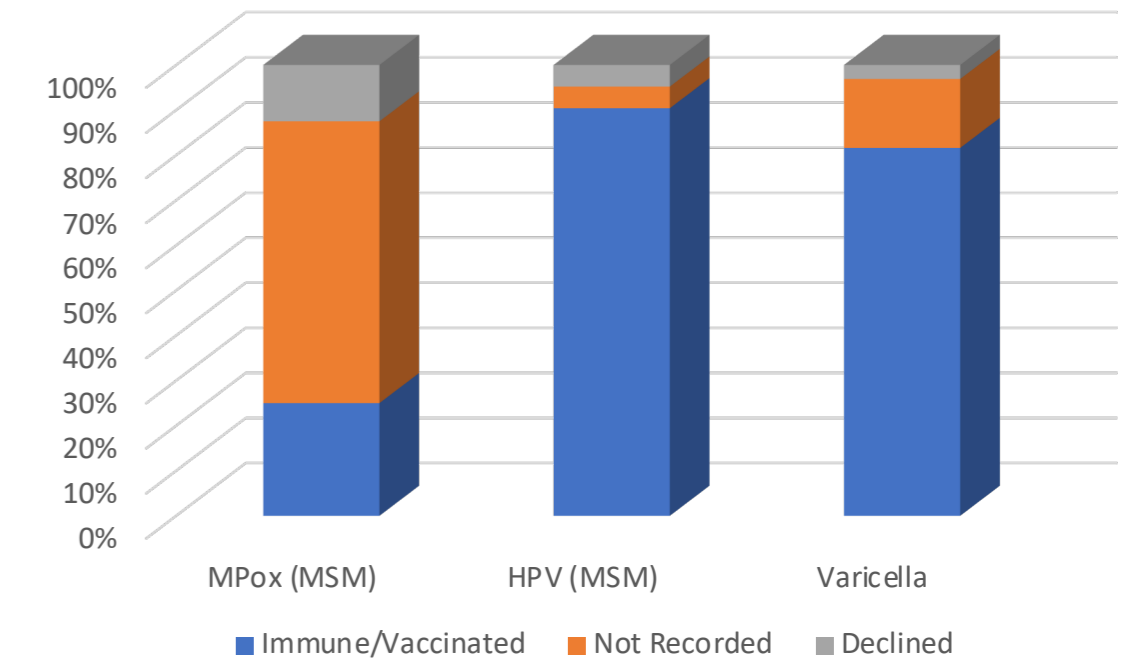
67% had received primary vaccination for SARS-CoV-2, with 34.3% of these declining booster vaccination. 31.25% of Ukrainian patients declined primary vaccination compared to 15.4% of the remaining population. Of those who had not received pneumococcal vaccination, 21.9% of Ukrainian nationals declined compared with 7.7% of the remaining population.



64.3% were measles immune, 66% immune to mumps, 71.4% immune to rubella. Of note, 74.4% of non-immune Ukrainian nationals declined MMR vaccination.

HPV vaccination amongst our MSM community was indicated in 87.5%. Of these, 90.5% were vaccinated. MPox vaccination was indicated in 8%; 25% were vaccinated and 12.5% declined.

Fig3: Vaccination uptake rates



Conclusion

Our review highlights lower vaccination for SARS-CoV-2 than the general Irish population. Refusal rates of MMR vaccination was notable and of concern in the Ukrainian cohort from a public health perspective. Difficulties in assessing pneumococcal vaccination status in transferred patients without relevant documentation was highlighted. Rates of vaccine decline were higher in the Ukrainian cohort compared with the remaining population. A new documentation tool and strategies to increase vaccination rates have been implemented since conducting this review.