Author's response to reviews

Title: "It's easier in pharmacy": why some patients prefer to pay for flu jabs rather than use the National Health Service

Authors:

Claire Anderson (claire.anderson@nottingham.ac.uk)
Tracey Thornley (Tracey.Thornley@boots.co.uk)

Version: 4
Date: 8 November 2013

Author's response to reviews: see over
Minor Essential Revisions
I think the restructuring of the background and addition of references to support statements relating to pharmacies safely providing vaccinations has improved the manuscript. However, I still feel the background would benefit from; it would help the reader if references were provided to:

- published vaccination targets; the statement ‘The uptake of NHS-commissioned flu vaccinations in community pharmacies in England has increased significantly in recent years’.

REFERENCE BELOW

Each year, many LPCs across the country present a case to their local NHS commissioners for using community pharmacy to provide seasonal ‘flu vaccinations. Over the last four years, an increasing number of LPCs have been successful and some have gathered data on the delivery of the service.

I think it would still be helpful to provide a bit more information about how/why the 13 pharmacies were chosen and how representative or not they may be. Were all pharmacies ranked in terms of the number of vaccinations they provided (the previous year?) and then the top 13 chosen? Were they from across the country? Was the number 13 chosen for a particular reason?

Criteria for selecting the 13 pharmacies:
- English pharmacy
- Participating pharmacies were selected from those already providing the private service, and ensuring a representative mix of city centre Flagship and edge of town Health & Beauty formats.
- As it was additional workload, pharmacies area managers had to agree to the pharmacy participating
- Pharmacies were picked from the top 100 performing pharmacies (based on flu performance)
- 13 pharmacies were picked to give a good geographical spread, and mixture of formats
- Pharmacies offering the free NHS flu service were avoided

In relation to the number of people aged 65+ I think it would be helpful for the reader for you to explain the reason for the n=50 in the text and n=48 in Table 2 (perhaps as a footnote?) as you have done in the response to my question. Done as foot note to table 2

The addition of row totals to tables is useful. I still think it would be helpful if: the Table 1 title included reference to the fact these data relate to the 100 people who recalled being contacted by their GP about vaccination, but chose to go to the pharmacy; and if the number of times (in brackets) each ‘other’ reason was given was provided in the footnote.
Table 1 Reasons given for not visiting a GP surgery to get a flu immunisation based on the patients who were contact by their GP (sub set survey sample, n=100)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason given for not visiting a GP**</th>
<th>Number of patients</th>
<th>Proportion of patients (n=100)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not convenient to go there</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult to get an appointment</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaccine unavailable</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer to go to a pharmacy</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses</td>
<td>132</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other reasons given included not eligible at the surgery (10), unable to access GP (2), patients not wanting to wait (2), patient referred to a pharmacy (1), flu jab batch failures (1), limited flu clinics (1), surgeries considered too crowded (1)