

OPEN researchers studying vaccine hesitancy in community pharmacies

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Project using surveys, interviews to shed light on issue.

Even when flu shots are free and easily accessible, many people choose not to get vaccinated against seasonal influenza.

“Vaccine hesitancy,” described as the voluntary refusal or delay in vaccination despite a vaccination’s availability, is the focus of a new project being conducted through the Ontario Pharmacy Research Collaboration (OPEN).

Led by Nancy Waite, professor and associate director of clinical education, and the Ontario College of Pharmacists professor in pharmacy innovation at the University of Waterloo’s School of Pharmacy, the project is using surveys and interviews to shed light on the factors that affect influenza vaccine hesitancy in community pharmacy.

The researchers are inviting practicing community pharmacists to participate in a survey that explores their knowledge, attitudes and behaviours toward influenza vaccine hesitancy.

Pharmacists identified through the survey will then be invited to participate in an interview to talk about their day-to-day experiences with those hesitating to be vaccinated and the challenges they face in addressing patients’ concerns.

One of the study’s goals is to assess techniques used by community pharmacists to overcome vaccine hesitancy. As well, the research will identify the characteristics of interventions to reduce vaccine hesitancy.

It’s hoped that the results of the study will help improve the understanding of influenza vaccine hesitancy from the perspective of Ontario community pharmacists.

The research is also expected to lead to the development of tools and interventions tailored to community pharmacists to help them communicate with people who are hesitant to get a flu shot and potentially increase provincial vaccination rates.
