

# Awareness and uptake of the pork-free, injectable flu vaccine in the Muslim community

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## Background:

The childhood nasal flu vaccine programme acts to minimise flu transmission amongst the vulnerable population; however, the British Muslim community have consistently reported lower rates of uptake. A Public Health England study in Luton concluded that the main reason for hesitancy within Muslims was because the nasal vaccine contained pork gelatine. In an effort to increase its uptake, last year the government offered an injectable, pork-free alternative to those unwilling to take the nasal vaccine due to pork. However, little follow up has been done to assess the awareness and uptake of this alternative, pork-free flu vaccine in the Muslim community.

## Objectives:

The aims are (1) to explore the awareness and views surrounding pork-free, injectable flu vaccine in the Muslim community; (2) to assess uptake of the yearly childhood flu vaccination in the Muslim community.

## Methods:

A survey was designed using Google forms and distributed amongst the Muslim community through social media. Data collection lasted between February-May 2022. A total of 60 responses were received, of which 27 were from Muslim-identifying parents with children eligible for the vaccine. Such respondents completed further questions regarding flu vaccine uptake amongst their children.

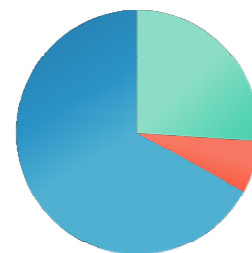
## Results:

95% of survey respondents believed that offering the pork-free alternative would increase vaccination rates in

Muslim children. 78% of respondents were not aware of the injectable, pork-free alternative to the nasal flu vaccine. 67% of Muslim-identifying parents did not consent for their children to take the flu vaccine; the most common reason (44%) being that the vaccine contains pork. 75% of parents who refused due to pork, were not offered the pork-free alternative.

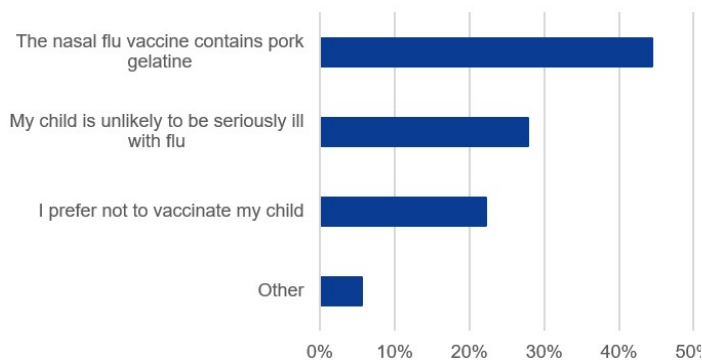
## Conclusions:

Despite strong consensus that offering the injectable, pork-free alternative will increase childhood flu immunisation rates, a lack of awareness may have limited the extent to which this option has increased uptake in practise. The findings of this small-scale, retrospective study should highlight the need for improved information sharing through public health initiatives. Given the national importance of increasing childhood flu vaccine uptake, it would be a disservice to leave the Muslim community behind in these efforts at the final hurdle.



2i. UPTAKE OF THE FLU VACCINE IN THE 2020/21 FLU SEASON

(75% of parents who refused the nasal vaccine due to pork, were not offered the pork-free alternative)



## 2ii. REASONS FOR PARENTAL REFUSAL OF THE FLU VACCINE

### References

1. A collaborative study to understand and meet the needs of a Luton community and influence flu vaccination uptake. (2019).
2. The national flu immunisation programme 2020 to 2021-update. (2020).