



Increasing Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Vaccine Uptake Amongst Pregnant Women: a Quality Improvement Project

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Background

RSV infection is the **leading cause of infant hospitalisations** worldwide. Infants under 6 months of age are at high risk of severe infections such as bronchiolitis and pneumonia. Globally, approximately **50,000 RSV-attributable deaths** occur each year in infants under 6 months of age. Maternal immunisation offers an effective strategy to reduce infant disease severity in this population.

As of September 1st, 2024, updated guidelines in the United Kingdom advise that all pregnant women from **28 weeks' gestation** should receive the RSV vaccine. However, due to the recent nature of this policy change, awareness remains limited amongst many expectant mothers and clinicians. Pregnant women are therefore at risk of not receiving the vaccine. Due to the updated guidance and the seasonal peak of RSV activity during the winter months, it is essential to increase public awareness and promote timely vaccination uptake.

Aim

To increase RSV vaccine uptake in eligible pregnant women registered at a South London GP practice by **10% within four months**.

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Method

An Egton Medical Information Systems (EMIS) search was run to identify selected participants within the GP practice who were pregnant and eligible for the RSV vaccine but had not received it. This revealed a cohort of **150 patients**. Three Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles were subsequently conducted between October 2024 and January 2025:

- a text-message reminder,
- posters displayed in the practice,
- telephone calls to patients.

Throughout the PDSA cycles, data on the number of patients vaccinated was documented.

Patient confidentiality and autonomy were carefully considered, and the security of patient information was maintained throughout the project.

Results

- RSV vaccine uptake increased from **9% to 25%**.
- Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF) notifications about the RSV vaccine were added into the GP EMIS software as pop-up reminders.

Discussion and Conclusion

The clinical implications of this are significant; the RSV vaccine could prevent **5,000 hospitalisations** and **15,000 emergency department attendances for infants** nationally. At a time when awareness of recent guideline changes remains low, this Quality Improvement Project has initiated appropriate changes in a South London GP practice to support maternal and infant health. By informing patients in a primary care setting, the project allows for wider community outreach and highlights the importance and future need for increasing patient education, awareness, and engagement.

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Percentage of pregnant patients vaccinated between October 2024 and January 2025

