

## **BARRIERS TO VACCINATION FOR VACCINE-PREVENTABLE INFECTIONS: GEORGIA EXPERIENCE**

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Several studies have been done in recent years in Georgia to study barriers to vaccination for vaccine-preventable infections. In one of such studies, 278 obstetrician-gynaecologists in 8 cities in the country of Georgia were investigated on the knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to influenza vaccination during pregnancy. Most physicians perceived influenza to be a serious infectious disease (88%) and that pregnant women are more susceptible to it than the general population. Only 43% of physicians reported recommending influenza vaccination during pregnancy; 18% reported vaccinating any pregnant patients during the last influenza season. Most (75%) physicians reported a perception that there is insufficient evidence supporting influenza vaccination during pregnancy. Most (93%) were receptive to receiving additional education on maternal vaccination. Another cross-sectional study was conducted using a self-administered written survey of 288 physicians practicing in 7 healthcare institutions in Tbilisi, Rustavi and Batumi, Georgia. Data were collected on demographics, conduct of and perceived barriers to Pap smear testing, knowledge about HPV and HPV vaccination. Only 48% of physicians actively offered the HPV vaccine, although most physicians were receptive to increased education and training about HPV and cervical cancer. Another study focused on the prevalence and awareness of hepatitis B and hepatitis B vaccine was conducted among randomly selected physicians and nurse employed in seven hospitals in Georgia. Of the 1328 participants included in this analysis, 36% reported recommending against hepatitis B vaccination for children, including 33% of paediatricians. Among the 70.6% who provided a reason for not recommending HBV vaccine, the most common concern was an adverse vaccine event. Unvaccinated physicians and nurses were more likely to recommend against HBV vaccine. Additionally, health care worker age was inversely correlated with recommendations for HBV vaccine with older workers less likely to recommend it.

### **Biography**

George Kamkamidze, MD, PhD, MS is the Full time professor at the Department of Immunology and Infectious Diseases, University of Georgia and the Head of Research Department, Health Research Union, Tbilisi, Georgia. He got his MD and PhD from the Tbilisi State Medical University and the MS in Biometry and Statistics from the Albany School of Public Health, SUNY, Albany, NY. He was also a Post-doctoral fellow at the Wadsworth Center for Laboratories and Research, Albany, NY and at the Laboratory of Immunology, Hospitals Group Pitie-Salpetriere, Paris, France. His research interest is focused on the immunology and immunogenetic aspects of HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis and other persistent viral infections. He has published more than 50 papers in peer-reviewed journals.

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