

BACKGROUNDER: AV-HCP ECHO | Responding to gaps in continuous education for healthcare professionals

The global ageing population is expected to increase from 9.4% in 2020 to 16% in 2050. In the context of healthy ageing and a life course approach to immunization, older persons are a rapidly growing population at risk for serious complications and death associated with infectious diseases. Parallel to the process of ageing is the increasing vulnerability to infectious diseases for those with noncommunicable diseases.

The societal value of immunization is well-known during childhood years, however, governmental investment has been lacking when it comes to ensuring populations and HCPs most at risk of infectious diseases have a sound understanding of the importance of vaccination.

In the face of emerging and ongoing vaccine hesitancy, HCPs still remain the most trusted advisors, influencers and advocates of vaccination decisions for older adults. HCPs are responsible for adhering to evidence-based immunization guidelines to communicate vaccine health and safety, combat vaccine hesitancy and stay informed about vaccines. While various competency training programs are available for those qualified to administer vaccines, there are significant gaps in the continuous education of HCPs resulting in a lack of confidence and ambivalence in promoting immunization.

Health professional associations have recognized the gap in education about vaccines and vaccination for older adults, yet they still need to be significantly present in professional efforts to promote vaccination as one of the most effective public health interventions for those most at risk. The IFA's AV-HCP ECHO responded to this gap in continuous education by delivering a successful and interactive learning series aimed at fostering a community of HCPs in the field of adult vaccination. The program aimed to enable HCPs to become champions and advocates of adult vaccination. Together, experts and learners came together to propose key recommendations and good practices for HCPs to advocate for and improve adult vaccination.

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The [International Federation on Ageing](#) (IFA) is an international, non-governmental organization (NGO) with a unique membership base comprising government, NGOs, academics, industry, and individuals in over 80 countries. Nearly 50 years old, the IFA has become known as a leading and innovative organization that works across disciplines and sectors toward common goals that improve the lives of older people. Through the IFA's formal relations with the World Health Organization (WHO) and general consultative status at the United Nations and its agencies, the IFA is in the position to advocate directly with member states and contribute to and inform intergovernmental dialogue.