



**Title** Exploring the Needs, Concerns and Behaviors of People With Existing Respiratory Conditions in Relation to the H1N1 Swine Influenza Pandemic: A Multicentre Survey and Qualitative Study

**Agency** NETSCC, HTA, NIHR Evaluation and Trials Coordinating Centre  
Alpha House, University of Southampton Science Park, Southampton, SO16 7NS, United Kingdom;  
Tel: +44 2380 595 586, Fax: +44 2380 595 639; hta@soton.ac.uk, www.hta.ac.uk

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## Aim

To explore and compare information needs, worries, and concerns, and health-related behaviors regarding swine flu in people with respiratory conditions and their family members.

## Conclusions and results

Participants were generally well-informed about swine flu, but more targeted information would have been welcomed. Participants were not highly anxious about swine flu, but did recognize risks for patients. Behavior change was modest, but in line with recommendations. Vaccination intent was high. Most patients (P) and family members (FM) wanted more information (n = 158, 62.5% P; n = 55, 54.4% FM), but few felt completely uninformed (n = 15, 5.9% P; n = 3, 3.0% FM). Most had already received information about swine flu (n = 187, 73.9% P; n = 78, 77.2% FM), mainly via a leaflet delivered to their home (n = 125, 49.4% P; n = 55, 54.5% FM). Information received was considered helpful (n = 154, 60.9% P; n = 77, 72.6% FM), but many wanted more condition-specific information (n = 141, 55.7% P; n = 60, 59.4% FM). More patients were worried than not worried about swine flu. Family members were less often concerned about personal risk than about risk to patients. Two-thirds incorrectly believed patients had increased risk of developing swine flu, but most correctly identified patients' greater risk of developing complications. Commonly adopted preventative measures were more frequent hand washing and greater use of sanitizing hand gel. In total, 212 patients (83.8%) and 69 family members (68.3%) were very/fairly likely to take up swine flu vaccination. Qualitative data mirrored survey findings.

## Recommendations

See Executive Summary link [www.hta.ac.uk/project/2224.asp](http://www.hta.ac.uk/project/2224.asp).

## Methods

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## Further research/reviews required

- 1) Work to identify effective means of delivering targeted information to high-risk groups during a pandemic would be of particular value.
- 2) Follow-up to establish whether vaccination intentions were followed through (and, if not, why) would be of value. It would also be interesting to know why these patients and family members were so highly motivated and whether this could provide lessons for future vaccination programs.
- 3) Further research to improve understanding of risk perception (from the effects of swine flu and from vaccination) and its influence on decision-making in high-risk groups is needed.
- 4) Future work needs to establish whether issues identified by our participants regarding the role of the mass media would also be raised by people with respiratory conditions more widely, or by other high-risk groups.
- 5) Given the extensive reporting of the pandemic by the mass media, and health-related agencies' use of the mass media to communicate pandemic-related messages, work is urgently needed to explore the influence of mass media on pandemic-related knowledge and behavior in high-risk groups, and to better understand how mass media can most effectively be used to communicate risk data, especially to high-risk groups.
- 6) Issues of saliency suggest lessons for timing of future comparable research in a pandemic.
- 7) Our experiences highlight the need to recognize and develop strategies to overcome the challenges of including 'hard-to-reach' groups when undertaking short projects in the context of an ongoing pandemic.