Promotion of Respiratory Etiquette
Seasonal Influenza (Flu) Interventional Project  2007/2008

Public Health Service of Alto Minho
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Seasonal Flu prevention and control has three components: vaccination, treatment and no pharmaceutical public health measures such as personal hygiene, isolation of sick people in transmission period and finally hygiene of common spaces. Integrated in the Seasonal Influenza (Flu) Intervention Project 2007/2008, the Public Health Service of Alto Minho has developed, from October to February, an information campaign about flu, in the district communities, with two aims: correct behaviour towards flu and prevention behaviours of transmission also known as respiratory etiquette.

The main goal of this project was to increase the knowledge of Viana do Castelo district population concerning flu syndrome and its prevention measures.

Strategies
Development of an information campaign about flu syndrome and its forms of prevention, using local media, (local radios), posters and free distribution of pens, umbrellas, pill boxes, all of them showing respiratory etiquette as label message.

Activities
Several articles on seasonal flu, anti-flu vaccine and respiratory etiquette were published in 40% of the fifteen local publication of Viana do Castelo.

Posters concerning the respiratory etiquette were displayed in:
- 96% of school facilities (elementary, middle, high schools, professional and college).
- 100% of primary and secondary health care public facilities, gyms, elders' institutions and also pharmacies, private healthcare facilities, restaurants, cultural institutions, shopping centres, transports...

There were also activities in radio programs, health exhibitions and drama shows concerning respiratory etiquette.

1500 pill boxes, 5000 umbrellas and 1500 pens with messages of respiratory conduct were given to the aged ones and the healthcare professionals who were vaccinated in health centres and also leading figures of the district.

Assessment
The evolution of acquired knowledge by the population, concerning seasonal flu and its prevention, was assessed through comparison of answers to a questionnaire applied before and after the information campaign.

The questionnaire was applied before and after the information campaign on two samples of 250 individuals over 18 and registered in the healthcare centres of Viana do Castelo district.

The selection of individuals was made at random, based on the number of the familiar process in the SINUS and using the telephone number associated to it.

The questionnaire included two parts: the characterisation of the individual - age and sex - and the assessment on knowledge about the flu symptoms and correct behaviour towards its prevention and control.

The distribution of age and sex is homogeneous in both samples.

There aren't any significant differences before and after the campaign, in what concerns the understanding of the flu and the cold (Table 1).

There is an increase statistical significant in the knowledge on the prevention measures and respiratory etiquette (Table 2).

Spreading of information among the population implied an increase of their knowledge about the behaviour of respiratory etiquette with possible repercussions in the prevention of the transmission of flu and other respiratory infections.

It will be a way to follow!