

Phoning patients in primary care to remind them that their vaccinations are due, is definitely worthwhile

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COCHRANE REVIEW: Jacobson Vann JC, Jacobson RM, Coyne-Beasley T, Asafu-Adjei JK, Szilagyi PG. Patient reminder and recall interventions to improve immunization rates. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2018, Issue 1. Art. No. CD003941. doi:10.1002/14651858.CD003941.pub3.

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THE PROBLEM: The New Zealand Ministry of Health has identified increased immunisation as one of its six major health targets.¹ This is because although immunization rates are reasonably high they have not yet met the national goal of 95% of all infants aged eight months having completed their primary course of immunisation.¹ With increasing demands on general practitioners it is important to understand the most efficient ways to promote vaccination in primary care.

CLINICAL BOTTOM LINE: This Cochrane review showed that contacting patients to remind them to come in for their immunisations is definitely worthwhile. Reminding or recalling people by telephone, text message, letter, postcard or autodialer were all ways to increase immunisation rates. The telephone proved to be the most efficient method, increasing the rate of people getting immunised by 75%.²

Outcome measured	Success	Evidence	Harms
Recall or reminder of any kind	Overall moderate quality evidence showed if patients were reminded by telephone they were more likely to receive vaccinations (RR 1.28, CI 1.23 to 1.35)	This was based on 55 studies including 138,625 people	No harms with respect to patient recall were identified
Telephone reminder/recall	Overall moderate quality evidence showed if patients were reminded by telephone they were more likely to receive vaccinations (RR 1.75, CI 1.20 to 2.54)	This was based on 7 studies including 9120 people	
Letter reminder/recall	Overall moderate quality evidence showed if patients were reminded by letter they were more likely to receive vaccinations (RR 1.29, CI 1.21 to 1.38)	This was based on 27 studies including 81,100 people	
Postcard reminder/recall	Overall high quality evidence showed if patients were reminded by postcard they were more likely to receive vaccinations (RR 1.18, CI 1.08 to 1.30)	This was based on 8 studies including 27,734 people	
Text message reminder/recall	Overall high quality evidence showed if patients were reminded by text message they were more likely to receive vaccinations (RR 1.29, CI 1.15 to 1.44)	This was based on 6 studies including 7772 people	
Autodialer message reminder/recall	Overall moderate quality evidence showed if patients were reminded by autodialer they were more likely to receive vaccinations (RR 1.17, CI 1.03 to 1.32)	This was based on 5 studies including 11,947 people	

References

1. New Zealand Ministry of Health. Health Targets. 2017 [cited 2018 February14]; Available from: <https://www.health.govt.nz/new-zealand-health-system/health-targets>.
2. Jacobson Vann JC, et al. Patient reminder and recall interventions to improve immunization rates. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, 2018(1).

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