



## Seasonal influenza vaccination coverage in Indigenous children - room for improvement

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## Seasonal influenza in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous) people

- Influenza is a major cause of preventable sickness and death globally.
- Influenza-related illness and its complications significantly higher in Indigenous versus non-Indigenous Australians.
- In young Indigenous children:
  - 3x increased risk of influenza and pneumonia
  - 2x increased risk of hospitalised influenza
  - 5x increase in mortality.

## Funded seasonal influenza vaccination

**1999** – Indigenous people aged ≥50yrs or 15-49yrs with risk factors

**2008** – all children aged 6mo-<5yrs in WA only

**2010** – Indigenous people aged ≥15yrs

**2015** – national program for Indigenous children aged 6mo-<5yrs



## Aim

To examine influenza vaccination coverage in Indigenous children aged 6mo-<5yrs.

## Methods

- Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) data, 31 Dec 2017
- Annual coverage estimates (2007-2017) for Indigenous and non-Indigenous children aged 6mo-<5yrs.

Numerator (**n**) = count of children aged 6mo-<5yrs who received at least 1 dose of influenza vaccine

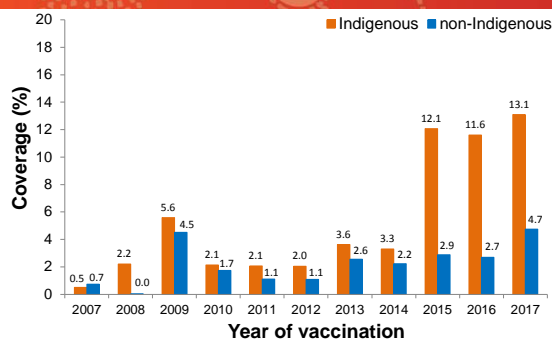
Denominator (**d**) = the total number of AIR-registered children aged 6mo-<5yrs in the year of interest

Coverage (%) =  $(n/d) \times 100$

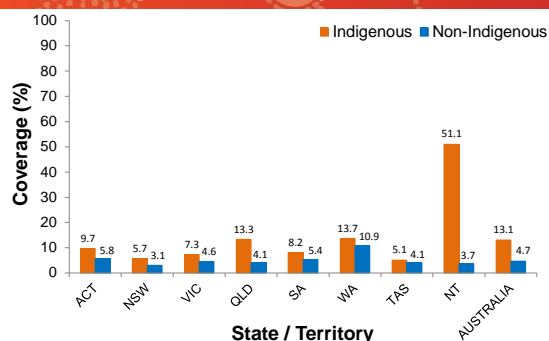
## Methods

- Influenza vaccination coverage (at least 1 dose) assessed annually (2007 – 2017) by:
  - Indigenous status
  - State / Territory
  - Age subgroup
    - 6mo-<1yr
    - 1-<2yr
    - 2-<3yr
    - 3-<4yr
    - 4-<5yr
- Receipt of 2 doses in the first year of recorded vaccination

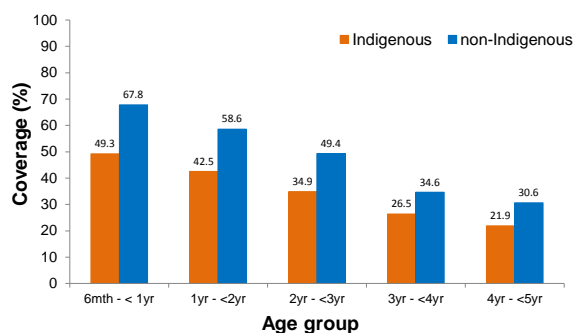
### Influenza vaccine coverage in children aged 6mo-<5yrs by Indigenous status, Australia, 2007 - 2017



### Influenza vaccine coverage in children aged 6mo-<5yrs by Indigenous status and jurisdiction, 2017



### Influenza vaccine coverage in children aged 6mo-<5yrs with 2 doses in the first year of recorded influenza vaccine receipt by Indigenous status and age group, Australia, 2017



### Potential reasons for low influenza vaccination coverage

- Parent / provider concerns
  - vaccine effectiveness
  - safety
- Awareness of the program
- Indigenous identification
- Access to culturally appropriate services
- Age eligibility
- Under-reporting to the AIR

<http://www.ncirs.edu.au/assets/surveillance/evaluation/Evaluation-of-Indigenous-Flu-final.pdf>

## Summary

- 13% of Indigenous children aged 6months - <5 years recorded on the AIR as having received the influenza vaccine in 2017.
- Coverage varies substantially by jurisdiction.
- Vaccine uptake may be improved by:
  - addressing parent and provider concerns
  - increasing program awareness
  - Indigenous identification
- From 2018, funded state / territory programs for all children aged 6mo-<5yrs may help improve influenza vaccination awareness and coverage.



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