BACKGROUND

The purpose of this project is to assess the adult immunization status and policy of childcare facilities within the Georgia Department of Public Health (GDPH), North Central Health District (NCHD) in an effort to encourage increased immunization coverage among daycare workers, promote the development of adult immunization policies in daycare facilities, and contribute to the public health efforts of health promotion and disease prevention. Vaccines have played a monumental role in the control and prevention of communicable diseases in school settings throughout the United States. Malone & Hirman, 2007. CDC, 2013. Georgia law requires that children attending childcare facilities or schools be protected from certain vaccine-preventable diseases (GDPH Immunization Guidelines for Schools and Childcare Facilities, 2014). While vaccination regulations have been instituted for children enrolled in childcare facilities, there are no known regulations for the adults working in such facilities. Child care givers are particularly susceptible to contracting diarrheal diseases such as Giardia and other diseases such as the flu, pneumo, and hepatitis because having close personal contact with the children they care for is a part of their job, and children under the age of five are vulnerable to infectious diseases (de Petra Wiegrag & Evans, 2012; Cordell et al., 2004). For these reasons, preventing and controlling the transmission and spread of communicable diseases in this type of environment is important for public health issues that should be considered by public health practitioners (Spikes, Faron, & Reader, 2011). The CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends 13 different vaccines for adults over 18 years of age and releases a recommended adult immunization schedule every year. Recommended vaccines are especially important for the adults who work in environments where the risks of contracting a disease is considerably high.

METHODS

The NCHD is comprised of 13 central Georgia counties which include Baldwin, Bibb, Crawford, Hancock, Houston, Jasper, Jones, Monroe, Peach, Putnam, Twiggs, Washington, and Wilkinson (NCHD, 2013). A packet containing a cover letter explaining the purpose of the research, assurances of confidentiality, a 10-item questionnaire, and a prepaid (stamped) return envelope was mailed to the directors of each of the 271 licensed daycare facilities. The questionnaire included items concerning counties in which facilities were located, number of children enrolled, number of staff members employed, vaccination record requirements, the presence of policies that promote vaccination and proof of vaccination, and the importance of educating daycare staff about vaccinations. Seventy-six of the 271 questionnaires were returned within the month-long data collection period, for a response rate of 28%. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data with descriptive statistics.

RESULTS

Table 1: Sample Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Breakdown</th>
<th>Total: Number of District Facilities 271</th>
<th>Sample Number of Facilities 76</th>
<th>Response Rate 28.04%</th>
<th>Sample Worker Population 773</th>
<th>Sample Child Population 4305</th>
<th>Sample Child to Faculty Ratio 56.6</th>
<th>Sample Child to Worker Ratio 5.6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff Age Groups</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSION

A large portion (75%) of daycare facilities within the district do not have policies in place that require recommended vaccines for their workers, and over 85% do not require that workers provide vaccination records upon hiring. Many (37%) directors do not know how often the vaccination files of their staff members are reviewed, and over 90% reported that child care workers should be required to have updated vaccinations. Lastly, over 90% think that educating their staff about vaccines is important and find vaccination information sessions to be beneficial (82%).

Recommendations based on this study include:
- Increasing awareness through dissemination of information regarding recommended adult vaccines coupled with the required annual vaccination audits performed by Public Health.
- Encouragement of vaccination quiz provided by the CDC
- Development of a policy to maintain up-to-date vaccinations for daycare workers.

Such efforts are highly beneficial in protecting childcare workers and the children they care for from the communicable diseases that are prevalent in the environment in which they reside.

REFERENCES


ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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