

Transcript Details

This is a transcript of an educational program. Details about the program and additional media formats for the program are accessible by visiting: <https://reachmd.com/programs/clinicians-roundtable/understanding-the-unique-burdens-of-influenza-in-older-adults/14490/>

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Understanding the Unique Burdens of Influenza in Older Adults

Announcer:

You're listening to *Clinicians Roundtable* on ReachMD. On this episode, sponsored by CSL Seqirus, we'll hear from Dr. Kevin Cleveland, who's an Associate Professor at the Idaho State University College of Pharmacy. He'll be discussing the unique challenges older adults face during flu season. Here's Dr. Cleveland now.

Dr. Cleveland:

There's a lot of things to consider in older adults because as we get older, our immune system doesn't work as efficient as it did when it's younger, and so what happens is a concept called immunosenescence, when our immune system generally wanes and then we're more prone to infection, and we generally see that as the case in older adults. And the other thing to consider is as we do get older, we also are more prone or tend to have other conditions such as diabetes and heart disease that also puts people at risk for influenza and also fighting off influenza-like infections. And the other thing to consider with that too would be patients with COPD or asthma; they also have a more difficult time with influenza-like infections as well.

We do know that getting your influenza vaccine actually decreases the risk of severe illness and also hospitalizations. There's a lot of real-world evidence out there that really shows that through vaccinations, we can actually decrease hospitalizations from influenza as compared to not being vaccinated.

But some of the other things to consider with vaccinations and what they have found in patients that are increased risk with cardiovascular disease is that influenza infections actually associated with myocardial infarction by 1.2 to 3.8 times. And what they found out is that with administering influenza vaccines, we can actually decrease that and it has actually shown to be of benefit very similar to what we would see with other prevention measures in people that have cardiovascular disease when we look at cholesterol-lowering medications. It's the percentage benefit is actually pretty similar to that of like a statin medication or even some blood pressure medications, so just getting the influenza vaccine can actually help decrease some of that risk.

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