

United Kingdom: Half of GPs refuse swine flu vaccine over testing fears

By [Global Research](#)

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Up to half of family doctors do not want to be vaccinated against swine flu.

GPs will be first in the line for the jabs when they become available but many will decline, even though they will be offering the vaccine to their patients.

More than two thirds of those who will turn the job down believe it has not been tested enough. Most also believe the flu has turned out to be so mild in the vast majority of cases that the vaccine is not needed.

Last night Government experts criticised GPs who decide not to have the jab, saying they will put vulnerable patients needlessly at risk.

A week ago, a poll of nurses showed that a third would turn down the opportunity of being vaccinated against swine flu.

News that medics are unconvinced by the need for a vaccine will cause grave concern to patients who will be invited for the jab over the next few months.

A poll of doctors for Pulse magazine found that 49 per cent would reject the vaccine with 9 per cent undecided.

A separate survey for GP magazine found that 29 per cent would definitely opt out of having the jab, while a further 29 per cent were unsure. Just 41 per cent said they would definitely have the jab.

Of those who said they did not want to jab, 71 per cent said it was because of safety concerns.

Richard Hoey, editor of Pulse, said: 'The medical profession has yet to be convinced by the Government's whole approach to swine flu, with most GPs now feeling that the Department of Health overreacted in its policy on blanket use of Tamiflu.

'Inevitably, that has coloured feelings about the planned immunisation campaign.

'The view among many doctors is that the Government hasn't yet made its case for why such a huge vaccination programme needs to be rushed in for what seems to be an unusually mild illness.'

But Professor David Salisbury, the Department of Health's director of immunisation, told GP

magazine that frontline health workers had a duty to themselves regarding vaccination.

'They have a duty to their patients not to infect their patients and they have a duty to their families,' he said.

The Pulse survey questioned 15 doctors, while GP spoke to 216.

The poll raised further questions over the Government's planned mass vaccination programme. The jab, currently being processed, will be fast tracked and will not be fully tested before it is administered to patients.

There are also concerns the jab can spark cases of Guillain Barre Syndrome, which can lead to paralysis and even death.

A mass swine flu vaccination programme in the U.S. in 1976 caused far more deaths than the disease it was designed to combat, and the Health Protection Agency watchdog has asked doctors to look out for cases of GBS when the vaccinations begin.

Earlier this month, Chief Medical Officer Sir Liam Donaldson announced that the jab will be given to people in high-risk groups, such as those with asthma or diabetes, as well as health workers such as GPs and nurses.

Some 14million people will be covered by the first wave of the vaccination programme, with everyone else following over the next few months.

The BMA is still negotiating with doctors over how they should be paid to give out the jabs. The union is demanding £7 for every injection.

A spokesman for the BMA said: 'The new vaccine has been thoroughly tested and we believe it should provide good protection against swine flu.

'It is important that doctors are among the first to be offered the vaccine as it will not only protect them but the patients they care for.

However, doctors like all individuals have the right to decide whether they are vaccinated or not.'

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