

# Seasonal influenza vaccination *Recommendations* & *Reality*

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WHO Regional Office for Europe

# Outline of presentation

1. WHO recommendations
  2. Recommendations for and monitoring of seasonal influenza vaccination in Europe
  3. Key challenges for seasonal influenza vaccination in Europe
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# Influenza vaccines

- Influenza vaccines introduced 1940s
  - Good safety record
  - Cost-effective
  - Best way of preventing influenza - but vaccine effectiveness varies every year and by age-group!
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# Priority groups for influenza vaccination

- Pregnant women
- Individuals with underlying chronic medical conditions
- Elderly
- Children (6-59 months)
- Residents of institutions for older persons and disabled
- Healthcare workers





# Pregnant women

- More likely severe disease and death (especially if asthma, diabetes, obesity)
- Risk of preterm birth, low birth weight, stillbirth, emergency caesarean
- Vaccination of mother can reduce infection in infants until 6 months
- Vaccine safe and effective







# Elderly

- Higher risk of severe disease and death compared to any other age-groups
- Higher hospitalization rates due to influenza
- Influenza outbreaks common in homes for elderly
- Long recovery from influenza infection
- Vaccine safe, but less effective with increasing age



# Children under 5 years

- Higher rates of disease, clinic visits, hospitalizations and deaths compared with adults due to:
  - Lack of pre-existing immunity to influenza
  - Often in crowded settings (school, day-care)
- Important role in sustaining influenza transmission
- Vaccine is safe and effective



# Chronic underlying conditions

- Persons with chronic diseases more likely to develop severe or fatal disease due to influenza infection than healthy individuals of same age group
  - Vaccine safe, but compared to healthy persons, vaccine effectiveness may be lower
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# Healthcare workers

- More likely to be infected with influenza compared to general population
- Can spread influenza to vulnerable patients
- Vaccination may reduce
  - Staff absence rates
  - Morbidity and/or mortality in patients
- Vaccine is safe and effective





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# Seasonal influenza vaccination recommendations and monitoring in WHO European Region

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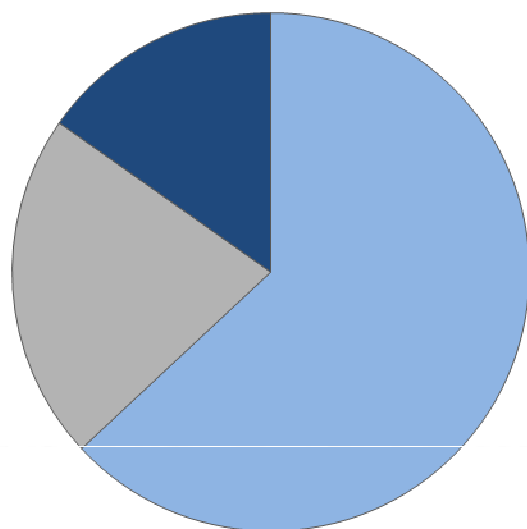


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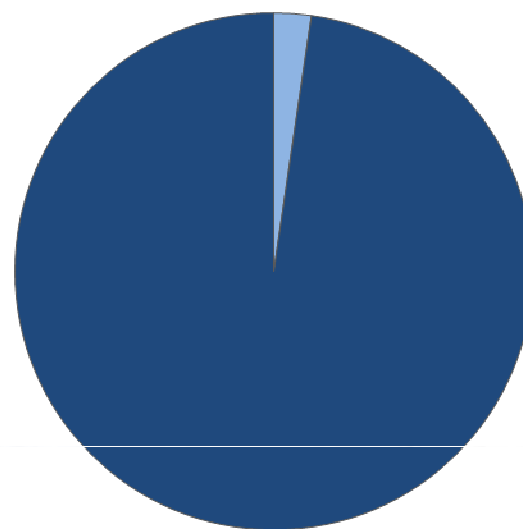
# Recommendations seasonal influenza vaccination in Europe

## Children



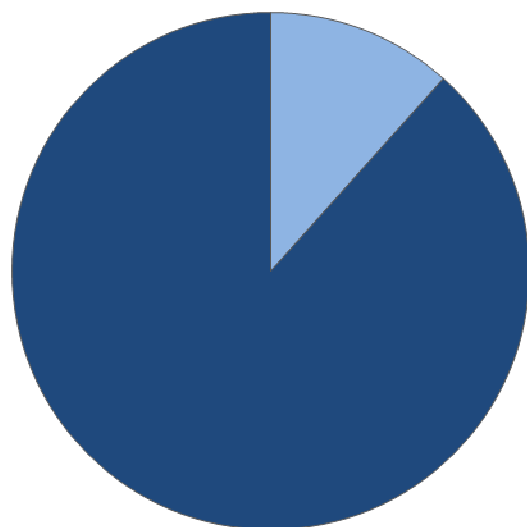
■ No recommendation  
■ All children > 6 months  
■ Some children

## Elderly



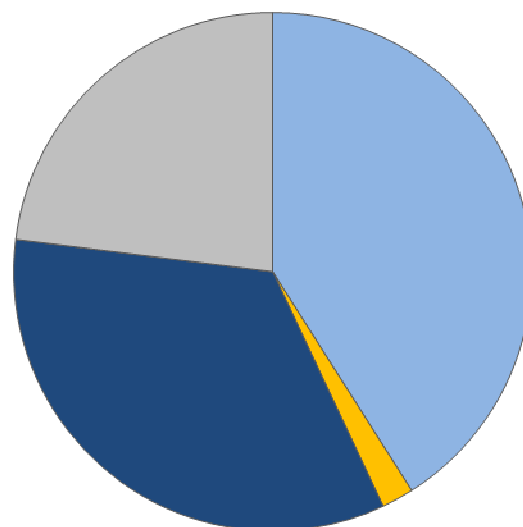
■ No recommendation  
■ Recommended

## HCWs



■ No recommendation  
■ Recommended

## Pregnant

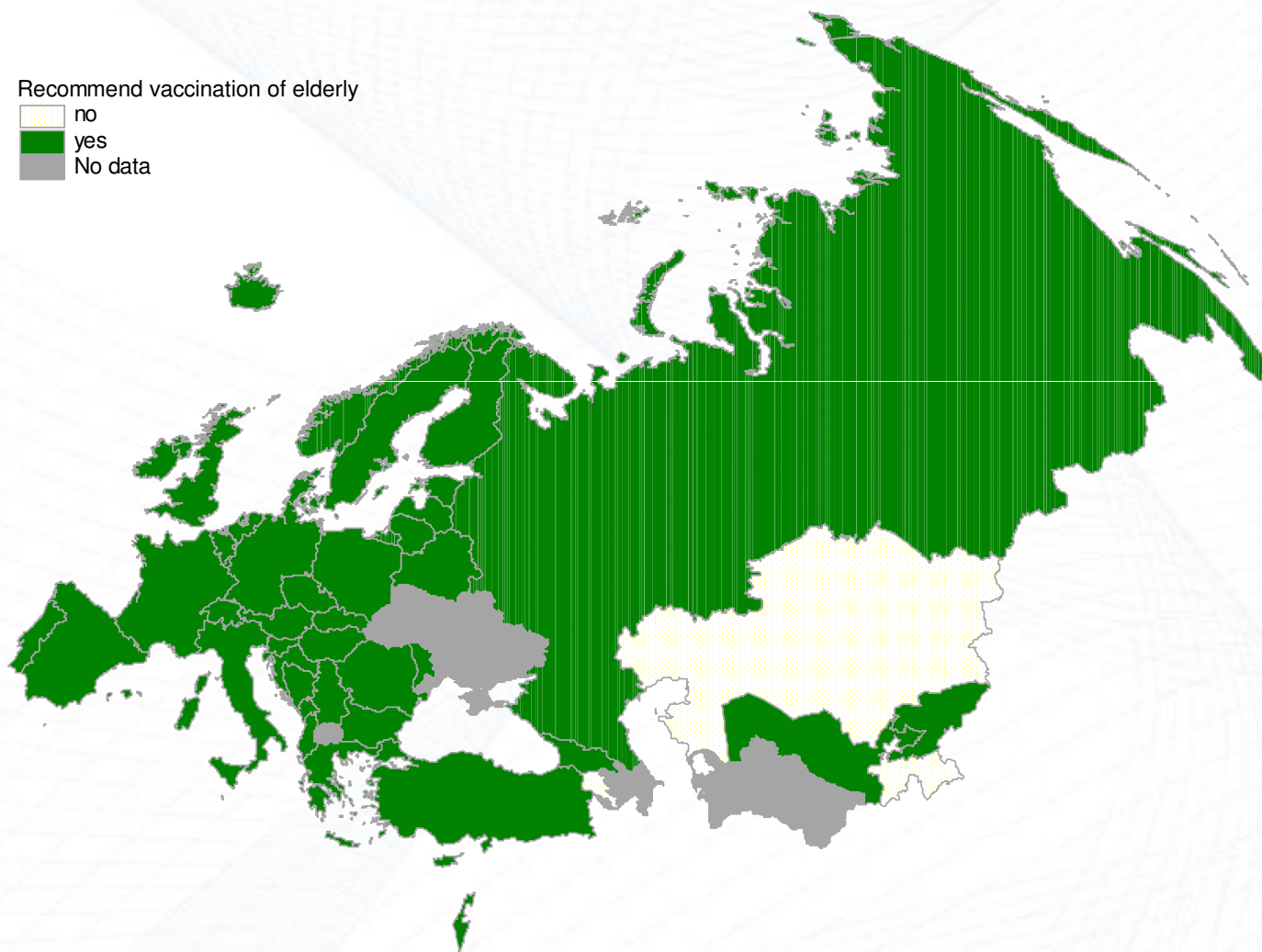
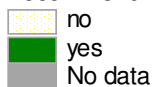


■ No recommendation  
■ Recommended against  
■ Recommended for all  
■ Recommended for some





Source: VENICE survey, 2011

# Seasonal influenza vaccination recommendation the elderly

Recommend vaccination of elderly



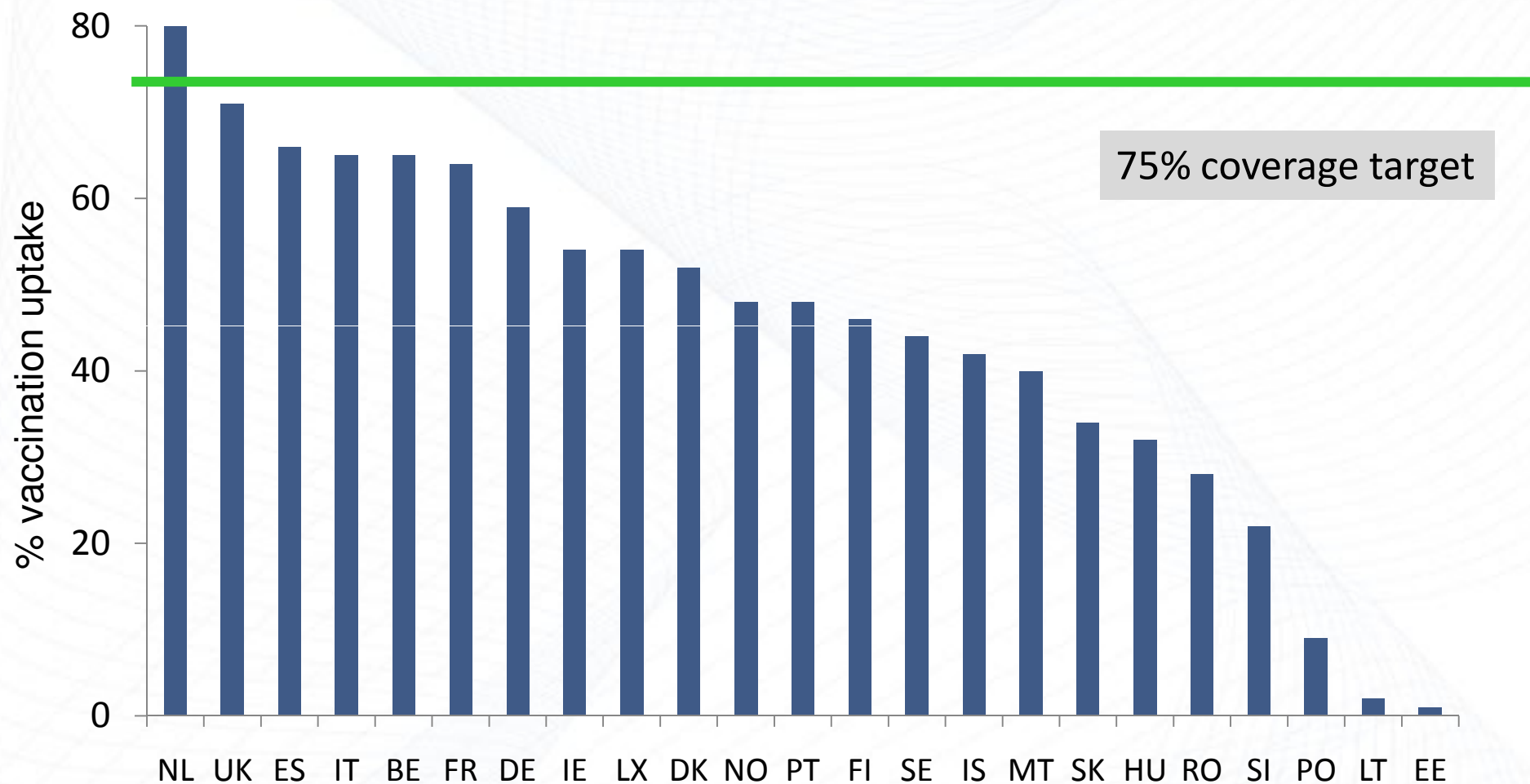
# Monitoring seasonal influenza vaccination uptake elderly

Monitor uptake in elderly  
 no  
 yes  
 no data  
No recommendation for elderly  






# Vaccine uptake in elderly EU/EEA countries, 2008/2009





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# Seasonal influenza vaccine recommendation pregnant women

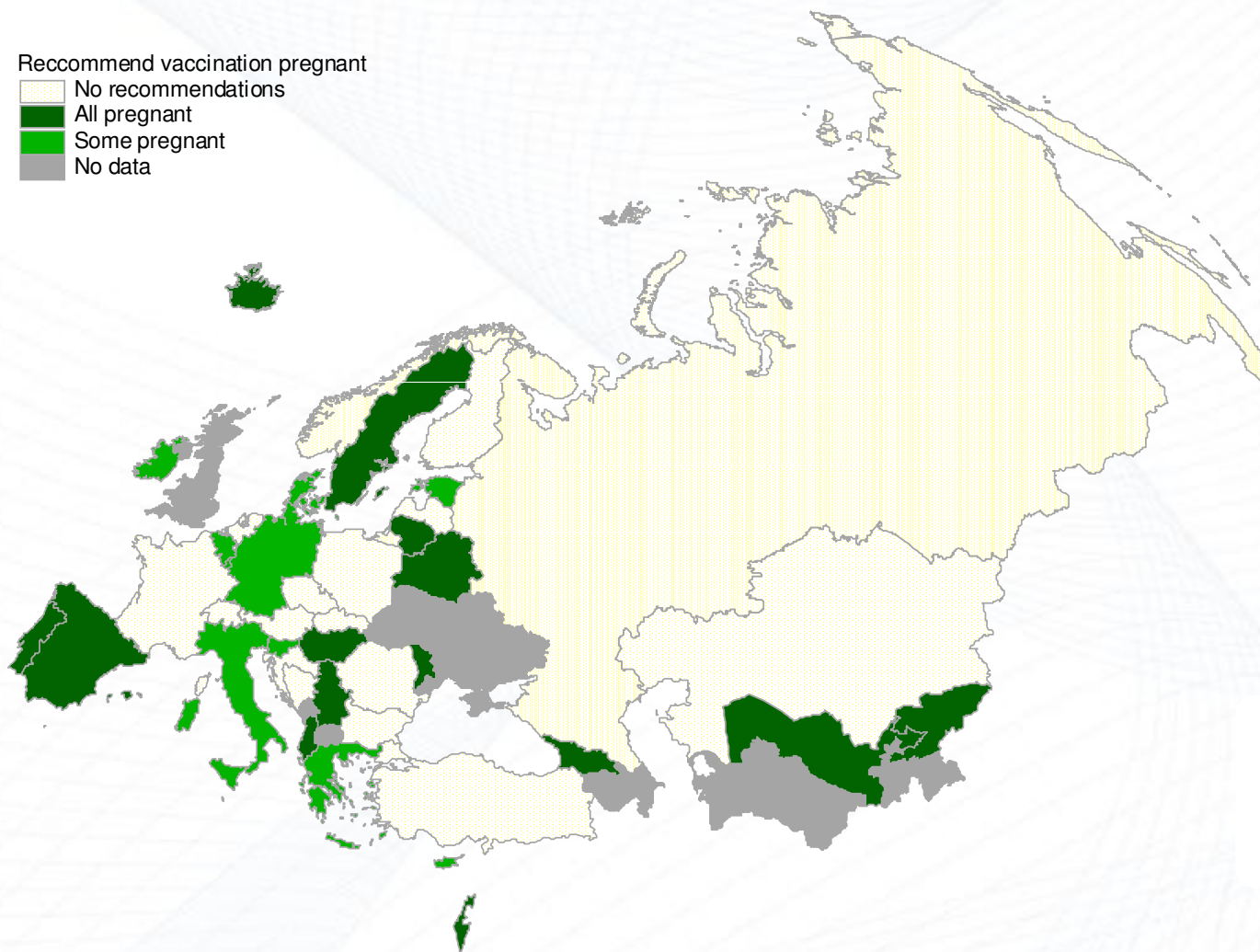
Recommend vaccination pregnant

No recommendations

All pregnant

Some pregnant

No data



Preliminary analysis, VENICE survey 2009/2010 season (April-September, 2011)

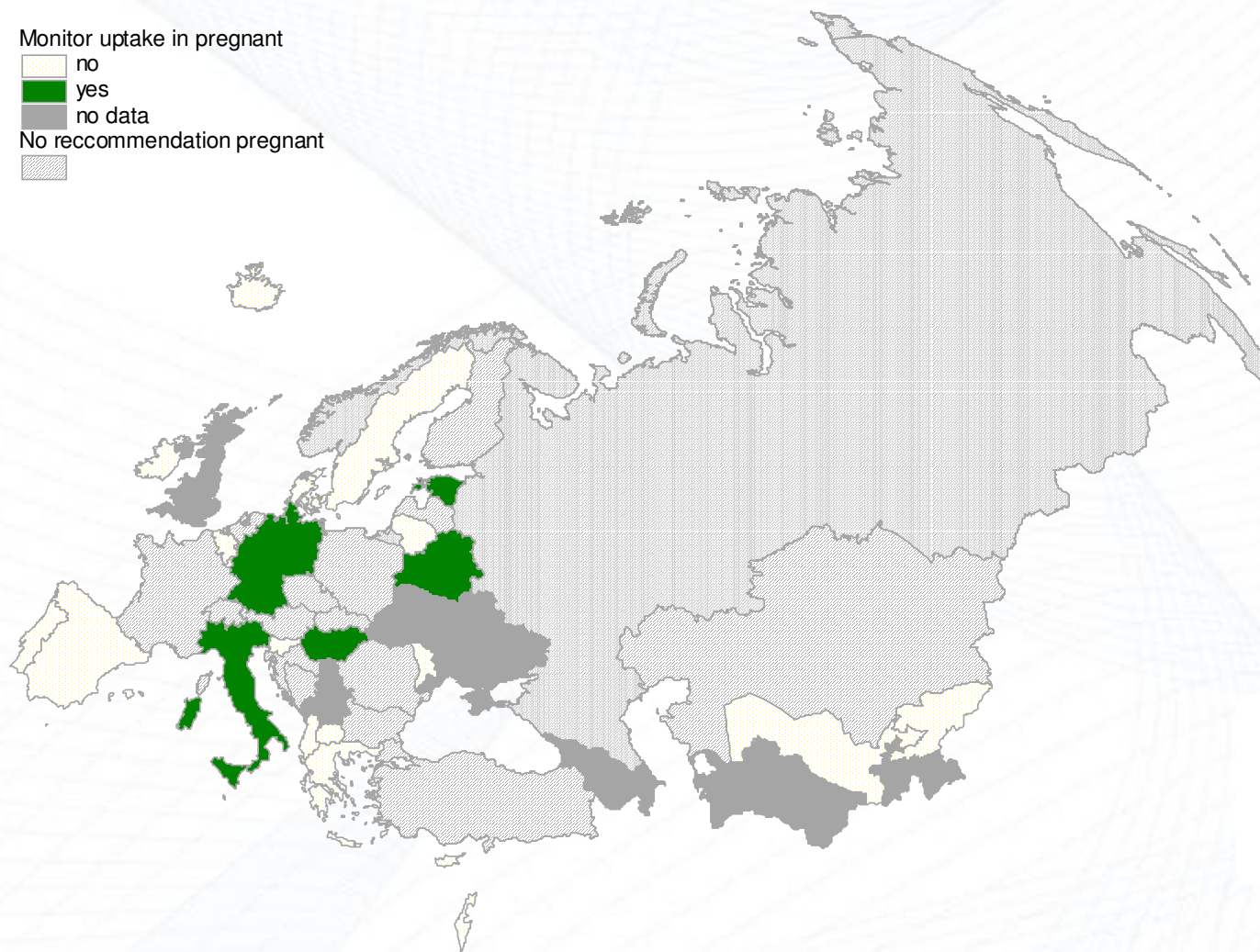


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# Monitoring seasonal influenza vaccination uptake pregnant women

Monitor uptake in pregnant  
no  
yes  
no data  
No recommendation pregnant



Preliminary analysis, VENICE survey 2009/2010 season (April-September, 2011)



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# Vaccine uptake in pregnant women





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# Key challenges and next steps....

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# Low acceptance

- Low vaccine uptake in key target groups in some countries despite strong evidence of burden and severity
    - Lack of knowledge, incl. safety concerns
    - Lack of recommendation from medical providers (elderly, pregnant)
    - No easy access to vaccination
    - Limited evidence of effect on mortality in elderly in countries with high coverage → loss of confidence
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# Lack of monitoring

- Lack of vaccine uptake monitoring (pregnant, HCWs, persons with chronic diseases)
    - Progress?
    - Impact?
  - Lack of AEFI monitoring
    - Rare reactions?
    - Safety in high risk groups?

.....risk of losing public confidence
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# Next steps

- Review national vaccine recommendations to explore possibility of including pregnant women
  - Establish burden estimates and assess cost-benefit of influenza vaccination programme
  - Prioritize risk groups in settings with limited access to vaccines
  - Establish vaccine uptake and AEFI monitoring
  - Work with member states on improving public perception of influenza vaccines
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