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Impact of booster vaccination on COVID-19 outcomes in Portuguese population aged 80 or more years old

Irina Kislaya

1Kislaya1,2,3, AP Rodrigues1, S Silva1, A Santos1,2, C Matias Dias1,2,3, B Nunes1,2,3, A Machado1,2,3
1Department of Epidemiology, National Institute of Health Doutor Ricardo Jorge, Lisbon, Portugal
2Public Health Research Centre, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal
3Comprehensive Health Research Centre, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal
Contact: irina.kislaya@insa.min-saude.pt

Background:
Vaccination is essential to control SARS-CoV-2 transmission and complications. The study aimed to estimate the number of SARS-CoV-2 infections, COVID-19 hospitalizations and deaths averted by booster vaccination in Portuguese population aged 80 or more years old.

Methods:
We developed an ecological study for the period of the Omicron variant of concern predominance (week 2 to week 16, 2022). Data on vaccine coverage and effectiveness, and number of events of different severity reported to the national COVID-19 surveillance system were used to estimate the number of averted events, prevented fraction and number needed to vaccinate. Uncertainty intervals (UI) were obtained using Monte Carlo simulations.

Results:
By week 2 2022, vaccination coverage in the target population reached 91.2%. Booster vaccine effectiveness was 4.1% (CI95%; -0.1 to 9.0), 87.5% (CI95%; 84.9 to 89.7) and 83.2 (CI95%; 80.3 to 85.7) against infection, hospitalization and death, respectively. During the study period, 70862 SARS-CoV-2 infections, 2697 COVID-19 hospitalizations and 2106 deaths were reported. Booster vaccination averted 2731 (UI95%; -298 to 5838) infections, 10629 (UI95%; 9173 to 12085) hospitalizations and 921 (UI95%; -202 to 2042) deaths.
12127) hospitalizations and 6608 (UI95%: 5725 to 7546) COVID-19 related deaths among individuals aged 80 years or more resident in Portugal. Prevented fractions were 3.7% (UI95%: 0 to 7.6%), 79.7% (UI95%: 77.3 to 81.7%) and 75.8% (UI95%: 73.2 to 78.1%), respectively. It would require to vaccinate 59 individuals (UI95%: 52 to 69) to prevent one hospitalization and 94 individuals (UI95%: 82 to 109) to prevent one death in the target population.

**Conclusions:**

The booster vaccination strategy had considerable impact on preventing severe outcomes in the Portuguese population aged 80 and more years old.

**Key messages:**

- High vaccine coverage combined with high vaccine effectiveness resulted in considerable reduction of severe COVID-19 outcomes.
- Information on number of outcomes of different severity levels averted by COVID-19 booster vaccination allows to strength public health communication.