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Letters to the Editor

REPLY to the letter to the editor by MG Vitek



Sir,

Any method that includes sampling is prone to sampling bias and has advantages and disadvantages. In addition, even if the same method is used repeatedly, results will differ based on variation, and if done on an annual basis, more diversity may result from details of the execution and other relevant (changing) circumstances. Likely, the main limitation of our study is recall bias. Nevertheless, the tool used in our publication in the past gave and still gives reliable results for planning the doses needed in countries all over Europe – and not only Slovenia - to assure that there is no shortage of product. Based on these data, the purpose of our publication was then to confirm what we expected from sales data: 1) The high number of TBE cases in Slovenia (and elsewhere) results from a lack of vaccine uptake; 2) while vaccine failures occur, they are rare; and 3) the lack of completion and compliance particularly

for repeated booster dosing indicates that FSME-IMMUN is effective even in the absence of antibodies in the blood.

One can debate if or if not there is a major difference between 25% and 10–16% vaccine uptake using different sampling methods intended for different purposes - in the end the conclusion is the same: We very much agree with Grgič-Vitek that TBE vaccine uptake in Slovenia is far too low and can be improved e.g. by implementing an NIP. For TBE – like for tetanus - only a high vaccine uptake can make a difference for both, the individual and public health.

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