

A review of Yellow Fever Vaccination Centre activity in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland during the COVID-19 pandemic

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Background: To review Yellow Fever Vaccination Centre (YFVC) services in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland (EWNI), provided in a year where international travel was severely restricted due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Materials and methods: YFVCs in EWNI are required to complete an Annual Return questionnaire to report vaccine use and yellow fever (YF) vaccination services. A questionnaire was created using SurveyMonkey (San Mateo, California, US) online survey software, and a link sent via multiple channels to the 2,295 YFVCs in EWNI, who remained active 1 January- 31 December 2020. Data was extracted weekly and analysed using Python.

Results: A total of 2,030 centres completed the questionnaire; a response rate of 88 percent. There was an 18.6 percent reduction in active YFVCs (2,295 in 2020 compared to 2,821 in 2019). 26,925 YF vaccinations were administered during 2020; a 76.7 percent reduction compared to the previous year (115,389) and an 80.8 percent decrease compared with 2018 (139,943). Demographic data remained representative of previous years: YFVC characteristics and age distribution of vaccine recipients. No YF vaccine associated adverse events were reported.

Conclusion: The COVID-19 pandemic has led to severe international travel restrictions and changes within clinical areas, for example staff redeployment or furlough. This has contributed to a fall in number of active YFVCs and number of YF vaccines administered, compared to previous years. The response rate suggests that, despite fall in demand, YFVCs remained engaged and YF services continue in a variety of settings.