ThinkWell and FluSurvey Citizen Research Event

Flusurvey launches on Wednesday 19th November 2014 for the 2014/5 flu season. This is an excellent project for public engagement. Simple recording symptoms and a few other things can help researchers learn more about Flu and better yet they share data with the public. ThinkWell looks forward to you joining with us to engage with this project again this year. You can read more about how this project works and then sign up!

- Log in
- Register

Professor Amanda Burls, (Director of ThinkWell) and her colleagues have written an excellent review on the evidence about vaccinating healthcare workers and to reduce flu transmissions to sick people by health care workers. Should we or shouldn’t we vaccinate... read the paper.

This year Flusurvey is pleased to announce an exciting collaboration with i-sense, an £11M EPSRC funded interdisciplinary research collaboration led by University
College London to develop early warning sensing systems for infectious disease. The podcast below share some of the interesting things researchers have found using citizen’s donated data.

https://soundcloud.com/lshtm/flusurvey-2013-14-alma-adler

Flusurvey has some exciting projects in the pipeline being developed with i-sense collaborators: Some participants this year will be able to take part in a self-swabbing exercise to see if the influenza-like symptoms that they report are being caused by a flu virus or something else.

They are also going to combine aggregated data from Flusurvey weekly symptoms surveys with that from social media and internet searches allowing flu trends to be monitored more accurately and earlier than ever before. The i-sense researchers at UCL will be using Flusurvey data to develop a mobile app which will provide up to the minute information about flu hotspots.

More information about all these developments will be available shortly – watch this space!

Why do we need Flu research? This video will show you how because of trials that were not registered or reported billions of dollars were spent on stockpiling a flu medication that may do more harm than good. One harm was billions of dollars that would otherwise be used to provide other forms of healthcare. In our Epidemiology class at Oxford taught by Professor Amanda Burls, Dr Jose Emparanza and Dr Juan Cabello, and who are also ThinkWell Directors we were given a research paper that regulators used to decide if they needed to take action on the possibility of an H1N1 flu epidemic. After discussing the information our group decided we would responded the same way as the regulators and the World Health Organization. Sadly they did not have all the information, citizen research is important because it increases research
transparency. This video shares a story of research that was hidden and how it happened then and could happen again.

To read about Flusurvey results from the 2013/2014 season, please click here. Or, read about our findings on BBC news, on The Guardian, or on the podcast: click here.

To learn more about why we need transparency in research and citizen involvement read our response to the WHO (World Health Organization) and join us in becoming citizen researchers or to critically evaluate research in our ThinkWell’s Citizens’ Research – Identification and Setting Priorities (CRISP) group.