The Effects of Appointment Defaults on Attitudes toward Influenza Vaccinations
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Although people are unlikely to make a flu shot appointment if they do not already have one, they are also unlikely to cancel a flu shot appointment that they have been pre-assigned. That is, relative to the opt-in default condition, the opt-out default condition increases a desired behavior such as influenza vaccination. This study examines whether default conditions affect long-term stable attitudes and perceptions regarding influenza vaccination. A 35-item survey was sent to 181 Rutgers University employees who received an email appointment manipulation three months before. Ten influenza survey items were subjected to factor analysis, yielding three survey-item groupings: “Safe and Effective,” “Risk (of getting infection),” and “Convenience.” In contrast to our research hypothesis, default condition did not affect the three factor scores. However, older participants and whites had stronger pro-vaccination attitudes, and interaction indicated that faculty had higher “safe and effective” and “risk” scores, while staff had higher “convenience” scores. Results imply that message-framing may be useful in increasing influenza vaccination rates, which may in turn influenza vaccination attitudes and perceptions.