

Flu Shots For Elderly Questioned

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(AP) A new study based on more than three decades of U.S. data suggests that giving flu shots to the elderly has not saved any lives.

Yearly flu shots have been recommended for people 65 and older since the 1960s and for those 50 and older since 2000. Vaccination rates have risen among seniors from 20 percent before 1980 to 65 percent in 2001, according to the NIH study.

Simonsen and her team of researchers could find no corresponding decrease in death rates. Their analysis took into account the fact that people are living longer and that more virulent strains of flu dominated the 1990s.

The CDC's Thompson said Simonsen didn't take into account the effect of a gradual lengthening of the average flu season over the decades. But Simonsen said that no matter what model she used to define a flu season, she came to the same result.