Factors of Parental Vaccination Decision

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Abstract

This current paper examines the impacts of vaccine effectiveness on children that are fully immunized with the aim of disease prevention. This paper makes three important contributions; vaccine effectiveness, information availability and fear of side effects. This paper is important because it demonstrates the importance of vaccinating children at young ages. It stresses in uncovering the factors that discourage parents from getting their children vaccinated. It also highlights the issues like incomplete knowledge on side-effects, the inability of evaluating cost-benefits and personal beliefs.

Although vaccinations are crucial for the health of the children and minimize the risks of diseases there are many factors their undermine its use. In a study conducted by Gilkey et al., (2016) it is revealed, “vaccinations confidence was consistently associated with early childhood vaccination behavior across multiple vaccine types”. It is critical to study the beliefs of parents regarding vaccination of their children. Without addressing the concerns of the parents and families about vaccinations it is difficult to target larger populations in countries where literacy rates are low.

Vaccines prevent diseases but the beliefs and concerns of parents can delay its use. Parental behaviors, beliefs, and ethics lead to refusal of vaccines that can contribute to adverse impacts on the health of children. Preventing diseases can decrease the number of children suffering from serious diseases. The lack of knowledge about vaccines contributes parents refuse vaccines. Hendrix et al., (2016) uncovers the impact of parents role on vaccination. The findings of the study reveal that most of the parents refuse vaccines on the basis of their limited knowledge that threatens the health and stability of the child. The common beliefs state “they will enjoy herd immunity without subjecting their child to the risk of vaccinating (free-riding). It depicts the need for addressing the issue of lack of parents awareness about vaccinations (Damnjanović, Graeber, Ilić, Lam, 2018).

A Causal Analysis of the Relationship Between X and Y

This paper examined the effect of parental decision regarding vaccines. Fear is the central factor that discourages parents from vaccinating their children on time that leads to several problems such as diseases develop in the future. This paper is intended to address the conflict on parent’s ethics and beliefs that are not true. Lack of education is the primary cause behind such irrational beliefs that risks the health of children. The hypothesis of the paper states that a lack of information or knowledge convinces parents to delay treatment that contributes to adverse health conditions. The research questions that guided this paper included, what will happen if we stop vaccinating children? What factors prevent people from getting vaccinated? The most important findings of this paper are that the major reason is incomplete information. Their lack of information or knowledge motivates them to link vaccination with other health issues such as autism. The article proposes solutions for promoting the use of vaccinations that include educating parents and informing them that vaccines are safe. This will be an effective technique used for removing their concerns about the harmful impacts of vaccination (Gilkey et al., 2016). The causal relationship explains that delay in vaccinations increases the likelihood of catching viruses of various diseases.

# History of the Problem

The history of vaccines started years ago when the medications were introduced for controlling diseases like polio and measles. Vaccines were introduced to society and but faced criticism because people considered them the cause of deaths and were not willing to accept the advantages. Researches have shown that vaccines are safe and prevent diseases. Many vaccines were created such as MMR, MMRV, polio, diphtheria, and others in order to prevent or decrease the number of diseases in America and all over the world. Another issue faced by the clinics and state in the process of vaccination involved ethics. The philosophy of ethics made it obligatory for the healthcare providers to take consent from the parents. Without a parent's autonomy, it was not possible to immunize the children. The clinics thus focused on “ethical considerations pertaining to herd immunity as a community good, vaccine communication, dismissal of vaccine-refusing families from practice, and vaccine mandates” (Hendirx et al., 2016). A common practice was followed for fulfilling ethical considerations by taking permission from the parents after sharing complete information about the costs and benefits.

# Literature Review

Vaccinations still remains a controversial topic that continues to expand throughout time. Parents who are uneducated regarding this topic and continue to decide for their children unwisely by refusing immunization. The statistics keep growing over time and it is affecting the children who are exposed to different types of diseases. Two-third of the annual deaths around the world are prevented by vaccinations. The findings of the World Health Organization (WHO) states, “global coverage with 3 doses of Hib vaccine is estimated at 72%. There is great variation between regions. In the WHO Region of the Americas, coverage is estimated at 91%, while it is only 28% in the WHO Western Pacific Region. The WHO South-East Asia Region raised coverage from 80% in 2016 to 86% in 2017” (WHO, 2018). The findings confirm that the low rate of vaccinations is common in underdeveloped countries like Africa and the western Pacific.

Table: Comparison on coverage of vaccination

People do not think about the cause and effect of declining vaccinations. There are different sources that can help and contribute to educating society and families about vaccines. Vaccines are safe according to researches that involve years of work and efforts. A dominant reason for vaccine decline according to the Centre for Disease Control is its association with autism. The society believes that vaccines lead to other health-related problems such as autism. These fears restrict them from accepting vaccinations that are baseless. Research studies revealed that vaccines promote health and no evidence suggests its relationship with autism. CDC also rejected the association between vaccination and autism by presenting their study. Findings reveal that "the surge in measles cases in 2017 included large outbreaks in 15 of the 53 countries in the (European) region. The highest numbers of affected people were reported in Romania (5,562), Italy (5,006), and Ukraine (4,767)” (Damnjanović, Graeber, Ilić, Lam, 2018). This confirms that the community still needs to be educated on the role of vaccinations.

Table: Country-wise representation of measles cases

The fear of parents is not only risking the lives of their children but also pose challenges for future generations. The fear about side-effects can also lead to having misunderstandings regarding vaccines. The best strategy adopted by WHO for addressing the concerns of the parents and society is by offering education. It has been involved in different campaigns that focused on spreading awareness about the need for vaccinations (WHO, 2018).

There are many programs that cover the costs of vaccines for children and adults. In California, there are different programs that contribute to helping children by offering free vaccinations such as Vaccines for California Children (VFC), and Vaccines for Adults (VFA). These are offered at any community clinics, private clinics, and country buildings throughout California. The attitudes and behaviors regarding vaccines have impacted the lives of several children and adults. Vaccines are created in safe ways that minimize adverse impacts.

Vaccine effectiveness.

Vaccines not only protect children but they also protect adults. It is believed that vaccines can save lives. While the opposing group believes that vaccines can harm people. The article of Hendrix et al., (2016) explains that the parent’s decisions affect the ethical practices and the lives of children are at stake. They focus on considerations such as the dismissal of vaccine, families who refuse to immunize their children and vaccine mandates.

Findings of WHO states, “global coverage with 3 doses of hepatitis B vaccine is estimated at 84% and is as high as 93% in the Western Pacific. In addition, 105 countries introduced one dose of hepatitis B vaccine to newborns within the first 24 hours of life, and the global coverage is 43%” (WHO, 2018). The prevention of deadly diseases like hepatitis is also possible by vaccinating children. This requires mitigating the challenges by removing fears of the parents (Damnjanović, Graeber, Ilić, Lam, 2018).

Information Availability.

Nesson (2016) identifies the challenges to the broader implementation of strategies for vaccinations. The article reveals that immunization is the key to prevent deaths and diseases. It also states that two to three million deaths and diseases have been prevented by vaccination. Lack of information and incomplete information is due to the reliance of parents on unreliable sources. This is also due to the reliance of society on old myths about medications that causes death. However, research has proved that vaccines kill viruses of the diseases and strengthens the immune system. Children who are vaccinated are capable of fighting against diseases.

Fear of side effects

In the academic journal, “Dying Preventable Deaths,” by Michaela Nesson, she also illustrates that parents are scared of side effects that vaccines might cause other complications, such as autism. However, no significant evidence has proved the relationship between autism and vaccination. Findings reveal that “parents are more focused on the potential outcomes of vaccine-related decisions, which can yield a specific pattern of the outcome bias” (Damnjanović, Graeber, Ilić, Lam, 2018).

# Discussion

In the United States, exposure of children to different environments can lead to various diseases if they are not vaccinated. Children are being exposed in schools to other kids who are not completely vaccinated. Parents need to be aware of the increases in the risk of preventable diseases. Empowering parents can help to reduce the number of cases that are growing over time. Unreliable cases on the harmful impacts of vaccines manipulate the thoughts of parents and restrict them to vaccinating their children. The statistics have proved that vaccines do not lead to any harmful diseases. Research reveals that receiving the virus of the vaccine can protect children and adults from getting the virus of harmful disease. The vaccines inject a weaker virus that allows children to build a strong immune system (Nesson, 2016).

Another controversial topic related to vaccinations is making vaccines mandatory. For example, the schools have made it compulsory for the children to get fully immunized before enrolling them. Children who do not have the appropriate vaccines are not admitted. This is a good way to encourage parents to vaccinate their children. This will not only prevent diseases, but it will contribute to helping the communities. The education of vaccines matters, social empowerment is also very important because it stresses on spreading the word about positive implications. Ethics, personal opinions, and different backgrounds must also be addressed for attaining full benefits of vaccination.

Vaccines have been approved by the centres of disease control (CDC). The decision of CDC is based on the comparisons between the vaccinated and non-vaccinated children. The findings indicate that vaccinated children have a strong immune system and they are less likely to catch the virus of serious diseases like smallpox, measles, mumps and polio (Hendrix et al., 2016).

There are many sources that share complete information about vaccines such as the media, the internet, and other experts opinions. However, irrational thoughts and beliefs regarding vaccines can affect a parent's decision about getting their children vaccinated. The information should be received by a health care professional. The most effective solution is to release information through reliable channels such as clinics, healthcare institutes and healthcare providers (Damnjanović, Graeber, Ilić, Lam, 2018). Similarly, campaigns are also organized by different healthcare organizations and WHO for raising awareness about the need and significance of vaccination. The use of multimedia and videos can be used for providing education to families about the health risks faced by their children. It is important to adopt adequate communication channels such as the use of technology and media for improving interaction with the targeted population.

# Conclusion

Some parents refuse to vaccinate their children due to their fears of side-effects and harmful implications. They believe that it is their job to protect their children from any risk that vaccines can cause. This decision might have negative consequences on the children. A parent who refuses to vaccinate their children must be aware of the risk of morbidity. According to different studies, it can be concluded that vaccines are safe for everyone. Education can be provided by different sources such as schools, health fairs, social media, or the internet. Giving educated about vaccines can decrease the number of deceased children. The most affected children are at risks of morbidity due to having a weak immune system. The encounter of diseases children with others will spread the diseases. This is common in the cases of measles and smallpox. It is the job of healthcare providers to teach parents about the importance of vaccination.

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