Refusal to Vaccinate: Approach to the Antivaccer

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Disclosures

• Merck- grant and industry funded clinical trials
OBJECTIVES

• Understand the current epidemiology of vaccine preventable diseases
• Identify the areas of greatest vaccine hesitancy
• List strategies to communicate with patients and families refusing vaccines
• 10 year later subtle behavioral changes were noted
• His memory and language slowly declined
• Developed unsteady gait and myoclonic jerks
• 1 year after the start of the symptoms was in a coma and died
Number of Measles Cases Reported by Year

https://www.cdc.gov/measles/cases-outbreaks.html
https://www.cdc.gov/mumps/images/outbreaks-graph.png
Influenza-associated Pediatric Deaths by Week of Death, 2016-2017 season to 2019-2020 season

- Influenza vaccine uptake for children in 2017-18 was approximately 58%.
- Influenza vaccine significantly decreases risk of mortality and severe disease.

1. https://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/index.htm#ILIActivityMap
2. Nation ML et al CID 2020
Demographics

Undervaccinated
- Black
- Resource limited
- Single parent family
- Young mother
- Limited education
- Inner city dwelling

Unvaccinated
- White
- Family income >$75K
- Two parent family
- Older parents
- College education
- Live in states that allow exemptions

Standard childhood vaccines: Parental refusal, UpToDate, 2010.
The map illustrates vaccination exemption laws by state in 2019, dividing states into those allowing religious exemptions, personal belief exemptions, or both. The source is adapted from the LexisNexis StateNet Database and the Immunization Action Coalition, May 2019.

For more information, visit: https://abcnews.go.com/Health/states-cut-vaccine-exemptions-skeptical-parents-switch-tactics/story?id=66689191
Fig 2. Heat map of county-level NME rates in 2016 to 2017.

https://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.1002578
What About Delaying Vaccines?

- 13% of parents report alternative vaccine schedules
- No benefit to delaying vaccines
- Delaying vaccines results in:
  - Increased window of vulnerability for the most vulnerable
  - Increased exposure to infectious diseases through increased number of office visits
  - Increased painful encounters

Survey of Pediatric Clinicians regarding Delayed Vaccines

- Perceived increase in testing, antibiotics, and ED visits when the child is sick
- Negatively impacts the work flow of a busy pediatric office
- Likely increases the cost due to the increased number of visits

Butler A et al. under review
“I did have a family who wanted to do one vaccine at a time. The mom brought him in pretty frequently…this little kid, regardless of whether he was here for a check-up or if he was sick, screamed the entire time. This little kid was really afraid to come to my office. It almost made it hard to just do my job to check him out when he was well.” (P17, Community General Pediatrics)
Survey of Pediatric Clinicians regarding Delayed Vaccines

“If we allow delayed…schedules and kids are under-immunized… we actually create a… **riskier** office for a child to come into… I don’t want [my practice] to be a place where it’s more dangerous for your kids.” (P12, Community General Pediatrics)

Butler A et al. under review
Approach to Vaccine Hesitant Parents and Caregivers

• Take advantage of opportunities to provide vaccine information:
  • Routine Clinic Visits
  • Dialysis Sessions
  • Hospitalizations

• Provide written and on-line resources
  • http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/index.html
I am worried about the side-effects of vaccines. I do not want to vaccinate my child today.

I know your child’s health is your primary concern. I will worry if your child doesn't get vaccines on schedule because the diseases we are preventing can be very dangerous, and most, like pertussis, Hib, and Strep are still infecting children in the US. Let’s look over the VIS and talk about the side-effects.

LISTEN
- Maintain eye-contact
- Avoid multi-tasking
  - Listen to and then restate parental concerns
  - Thoughtfully prepare your response
  - Incorporate parents’ values into your response

– Listen to and then restate parental concerns
– Thoughtfully prepare your response
– Incorporate parents’ values into your response
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vaccine Hesitancy Discussion Strategies:</th>
<th>Frequency used</th>
<th>Perceived effectiveness</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Often</td>
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<td>Methods for comforting child during</td>
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<td>vaccine administration</td>
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<td>Delaying vaccines puts others at risk</td>
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Approach to Parents and Caregivers

• Solicit and Welcome Questions
  • Ask open ended questions
  • Empathize with parents fears and desire to protect their children
  • Target education to parental concerns
  • Remind parents that their child’s health is your top concern
Approach to Parents and Caregivers

• Keep the dialogue going!!!
  • Know what type of parent/caregiver is in front of you:
    • Uniformed but educable
    • Misinformed but correctable
    • Well-read and open minded
    • Convinced and contented
    • Missionary
  • Acknowledge the work parents have done to research vaccines
  • Be prepared with a mix of science and anecdote
Approach to Parents and Caregiver

• Acknowledge the risks and benefits
  • “No vaccines is completely without adverse events or 100% effective”
  • Frame the risks and benefits with numbers:

  - Risk of brain damage from measles vaccine is about 1 in 1,000,000.
  - Risk of measles in unvaccinated person is 35 x higher than vaccinated person.

Risk of brain damage from measles infection is about 1 in 1000. Risk of measles in unvaccinated person is 35 x higher than vaccinated person.
Approach to Parents and Caregivers

- Respect Parents Authority
  - Build a partnership
  - Emphasize they ways vaccination supports their values
  - Document parental concerns for follow-up
  - Call or e-mail the most worried to communicate concern and reinforce trust
Refusal to Vaccinate

- AAP recommends against dismissing families for refusal to vaccinate
- Continued recommendation to vaccinate will result in uptake by some families
- Parents need to know their responsibilities related to refusing vaccination
  - Tell providers about vaccine status
  - Take precautions to prevent spread to others
  - Quarantine may be necessary in some outbreaks
Summary

- Vaccine preventable diseases are on the rise
- Significant morbidity and mortality are a direct result of unvaccinated individuals
- LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN
- Continue to have the dialogue
Thank You