

Evidence Summary of a Systematic Review

Who is this summary for?

For Doctors and Health Personnel, Administrators and Managers of health facilities, Community Health Workers and the partners involved in child health.

Parents' and informal caregivers' views and experiences of communication about routine childhood vaccination: a synthesis of qualitative evidence

Background

Childhood vaccination is an effective way of preventing serious childhood illnesses. However, many children do not receive all of the recommended immunisations. There may be different reasons for this. Some parents do not have access to the vaccine, for instance because of poor quality health services, distance from their home to a health facility or lack of money. Some parents do not trust the vaccine itself or the healthcare worker who provides it, while others do not see the need to vaccinate their children at all. People involved in vaccine programmes need to understand how parents experience different types of communication about vaccination and how this influences their decision to vaccinate their child.

Questions

- What are the parents' and informal caregivers' views and experiences regarding communication about childhood vaccinations and the manner in which this information is communicated?
- What influence does vaccination communication have on parents' and informal caregivers' decisions regarding childhood vaccination?

Key findings

- Parents generally found it difficult to know which vaccination information source to trust and found it difficult to find information that they felt was unbiased and balanced.
- Parents wanted health workers to have open, respectful discussions with them in a caring, sensitive and non-judgemental way, give clear answers to their questions, and provide a supportive environment for decision-making.
- They wanted this information in good time before each vaccination appointment and not while their child was being vaccinated.

Best practice recommendations

- Give information concerning vaccination to parents before each vaccination appointment.
- Organize open discussions between parents and health workers on the importance of vaccination for better decision-making.
- Using modern communication channels to share information on vaccination.

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