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Importance of vaccines for individual and public health: some questions about a possible impairment in the doctor-patient relationship, caused by the reluctance of family members to vaccinate their children

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Abstract: Despite being an investment in health with excellent cost X effectiveness, determining enormous impact on health, avoiding millions of deaths per year and increasing the expectation of acceptance of vaccines is not universal. As the number of vaccines available and their use by public health programs has increased, so has the number of people and groups who state concerns about the safety and need for vaccine application. Parents, caregivers, patients and health professionals themselves are part of these groups.

Keywords: Vaccination. Public Health. Ethics

1. Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) recently declared reluctance or refusal to vaccinate despite the possibility of doing so, as one of the ten major threats to global health (WHO, 2020).

Vaccination is known as one of the health actions with greater efficiency, having a great impact on reducing mortality and increasing the number of years lived. Its use is a confidence because it goes through a rigorous development process, including quality control in all stages of production and evaluation, both of the safety of its application in humans, and of its potential to stimulate our immune system for the

defense against invading microorganisms (Benecke and DeYoung, 2019).

As soon as its functioning is attested, they are prepared in the laboratory, according to what is known about the behavior of a particular virus, for example, in our body, in order to present this virus (or part of it) to our immune system, without causing the disease. Getting our body, prepared to present immediate and lasting defense responses, when the virus causing the disease invades our body. Therefore, vaccines are extremely important strategies for the prevention of infectious diseases (Olive *et al*, 2019).

2. Methodology

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This is a study with data collection based on bibliographic data collection. For this survey, articles were retrieved in several databases such as The Clinical Contexts (PepsiCo) and SciELO Brazil. The inclusion criteria determined for the selection of articles were: texts available in full, articles in Portuguese and In English from 2019 to 2022; master's dissertations and doctoral theses and articles in full that portray the importance of vaccines for individual and public health. All opinions or unreferenced texts served as exclusion criteria in this study.

3. Results and Discussion

Although the majority of the population recognizes that vaccinated individuals can protect others from acquiring infectious diseases, we still find people who do not recognize the importance of herd protection in controlling infectious diseases. The recent measles outbreak that occurred in the United States, Brazil and still persists in Europe could have been minimized if there was sufficient herd protection in the affected populations. As vaccination coverage cannot reach 100% of the population, the immunization of most subjects makes it more difficult to spread the virus to people with real contraindications to receive the vaccine or those who, even if vaccinated, did not obtain adequate protection (Brieger *et al*, 2017).

Among many other factors, the simultaneous application of several vaccines has been considered as one of the determinants among individuals who have doubts or refuse to receive vaccines and the ethical aspects related to vaccine refusal and the possibility of using legal measures based on ECA to convince parents to vaccinate their children motivate discussions between doctors and legislators (Pallivathucal and Noymer, 2018).

Vaccination of children involves the balance between the autonomy of parents in deciding whether to immunize their children and the benefits of public health in doing mass vaccination campaigns. The ECA establishes that it is the family's duty to ensure the realization of health rights, which includes routine vaccination. In addition, family members who oppose the vaccination of their children can seriously impair the doctor-patient relationship, sufficient to allow the physician to stop attending this patient (Code of Medical Ethics, article 36).

The great penetration and ease of access to social media have promoted a huge amount of information, not always correct, about the safety (or insecurity) of vaccines, their effectiveness, effectiveness, risks, etc., based on philosophical, political and religious foundation. The proliferation of this information may jeopardize the success of vaccines. The knowledge of the health professional with competence and safety to clarify the subject is able to minimize this risk (Giubilini and Savulescu, 2019).

In 2016, concern about groups that refuse vaccination

and their influence on the general population and vaccination coverage rates caused the WHO, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Medicine to write manuals and texts to guide physicians to deal with this new reality (WHO, 2020).

4. Conclusions

Despite the debates, legal and ethical experts agree that individual rights are generally invoked as a counter-argument, but this ignores that vaccination, through group immunity, is a public health intervention that protects communities, including those that cannot be vaccinated and that the rights in question are normally claimed by parents, implicitly ignoring children's own rights.

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