

Vaccines aren't trusted if people learn about them online or from friends

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People trust vaccines less if they get their information about them from friends, family, or the internet, finds new research from Nazarbayev University's (https://nu.edu.kz/?utm_source=bluesky) School of Medicine.

Vaccines are one of the most important inventions in human history, providing us with protection against several infectious diseases. However, there is a global decrease in the rate of vaccination and an increase in outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases.

Dr. Zylkiya Akhmetzhanova and colleagues studied the attitudes and views of 387 participants toward vaccines and childhood vaccination: 71% believed vaccines were effective and 65% believed they were good, while 35% were still sceptical or hesitant toward vaccines. Interestingly, 22% still attributed autism to childhood vaccinations. The participant's level of education did not appear to influence whether someone was vaccine hesitant or not.

Importantly, the source of information on vaccines appeared to have a significant influence, as those who received information from healthcare providers had no concerns regarding vaccinations. However, those who used the internet, family, or friends as a source of vaccine information did not trust their physicians and believed vaccination is not important for children's health.

Dr. Mohamad Aljofan, the senior author of the study, says,

"Vaccine hesitancy or refusal is one of the most important global health threats of our time. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates over 1.5 million children die from vaccine-preventable disease globally and that immunisation programmes save more than 3.2 million lives a year. However, there is a global increase in the rate of scepticism and hesitancy over vaccinating children. We believe the reasons for vaccine refusal are similar across countries and appear to be based on "pseudoscience" or false claims of major vaccine side effects."

This study demonstrates the significant role doctors and other healthcare providers play in improving vaccine acceptance, especially during flu seasons and the current COVID-19 pandemic, for which a vaccine may be the only solution. Therefore, there is an urgent need to increase public awareness about the benefits of vaccinations to communities.

These findings were published in the journal Expert Review of Vaccines.

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For more information, a copy of the research paper, or to speak with the researchers, then please contact Kyle Grizzell from BlueSky Education on 07904706136 or kyle@bluesky-pr.com