

Title: A Meta-synthesis of Factors that Influence Parental Decisions Regarding Mandatory Vaccinations for Children in the U.S

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Audience: Academic and clinical nurses and nursing students, interdisciplinary pediatric health care teams

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Abstract

Overview: Since the 19th century vaccines have significantly reduced incidences of vaccine-preventable diseases. Despite this, rates of parents who refuse vaccines for their children are rising.

Purpose: To better understand the perspectives, beliefs, and concerns of parents in the U.S. who hesitate or refuse mandatory vaccines for their children through an examination of qualitative studies.

Methods: Qualitative, peer-reviewed articles, published in English, that were reports of studies conducted in the U.S. and focused on parental perspectives regarding mandatory vaccines and their children, were included in the meta-synthesis. Of the 477 articles retrieved 15 articles met inclusion and exclusion criteria. Quality of the studies was evaluated using the CASP checklist. Synthesis of the findings was accomplished through thematic analysis.

Results: The synthesis was organized into three themes. Parents face too many sources of information, conflicting information, misinformation, and their own feelings of mistrust towards medical providers and pharmaceutical companies, leading them to question, "What do I believe?" Parents want to be part of the decision-making process, may not feel respected or feel rushed by providers, and feel overwhelmed by so many vaccines so early in life, leading them to ask, "Why so much pressure to vaccinate?" Parents receive input from physical communities, online communities, and narratives of bad vaccine outcomes from friends and the media, as they wonder, "Who will support me?"

Conclusion: Healthcare providers must take more time to address the concerns of vaccine hesitant or resistant parents and begin vaccine education with parents before birth. Better understanding parental perspectives allows healthcare providers to improve vaccine discussions. Trusting relationships between providers and parents lead to more effective decision making. When healthcare providers understand the sources and reasons for parental vaccine hesitancy and resistance, education regarding vaccines can be tailored to address specific parental concerns.

References

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