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Literature Survey to Understand Why Parents Don’t Receive Tdap Vaccine

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Introduction

The purpose of this project was to understand the reasons expectant and new parents don’t receive the pertussis vaccine and then to provide educational materials for parents on the importance of receiving vaccinations, specifically to protect infants from contracting pertussis.

Studies conducted over the past several years have shown a decline in vaccination rates. In fact, one study was done just a few years ago, with the purpose of educating parents and grandparents of newborns about the importance of receiving a vaccination against pertussis. During the follow up a month later, only 8% had been vaccinated (Tam, 2009). Because information on the safety of the Tdap vaccine, as well as facts about the dangers of pertussis can easily be found online, it is alarming to note that many parents still conscientiously choose not to vaccinate (Smith, 2017). This project aimed to pinpoint concerns that parents have about vaccinations, and then address those concerns in straightforward terms. Parents can then be encouraged to share that information with family members.

Methodology

The CINAHL, MEDLINE, PsycINFO, Alt HealthWatch, Health Source: Nursing/Academic Edition, Health Source – Consumer Edition, and Health and Psychosocial Instruments databases were used to search for research articles relating to vaccine hesitancy. The search terms, “vaccine*”, and “heistan*”, were used to find articles concerning the topic, and 690 articles were retrieved. Articles written before 2013 were rejected in order to utilize current research on the topic. Literature reviews were also rejected in favor of primary studies. Articles that discussed the measurement of vaccine hesitancy were rejected in favor of articles that specifically detailed reasons for vaccine refusal. Ultimately the results of nine articles were studied and compared to determine the leading reasons for parental vaccine hesitancy. Common reasons for parental hesitancy were pinpointed and addressed in an educational pamphlet.

Results and Discussion

The studies examined reflected four common themes for vaccine hesitancy: distrust of physicians as well as pharmaceutical companies, the desire to parent naturally, and concern regarding the risks versus benefits of vaccines. Parents, doctors, researchers, and pharmaceutical companies are believed to only promote vaccination to make a profit, and they do not provide adequate information relating to adverse effects of immunizations. Other parents believe that natural immunity is preferable to receiving inoculations, and that vaccines are harmful and ineffective – due to the many people who have received vaccinations and yet still experience health challenges. Parents believe their children are more likely to remain healthy through breastfeeding, eating organic food, avoiding fluoridated water, and playing outside. Finally, there a low perceived risk among parents of the diseases vaccines are meant to protect against. Parents do not differentiate between the severity of childhood illness such as polio and measles and the common cold.

Conclusion
There are many reasons parents choose to forego vaccination. It is important for nurses to be aware of parental hesitancy to effectively address concerns.

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