UNDERSTANDING PARENTS’ KNOWLEDGE TOWARDS CHILDHOOD IMMUNISATION: A PILOT STUDY

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INTRODUCTION

Immunisation programme in Malaysia started in the 1960s. To date, there are seven types of vaccines provided freely by the Ministry of Health for children from birth until age of 7 years. After the introduction of the programme, dramatic reduction in mortality and morbidity related to infectious diseases have been observed. Of concern, there has been increasing number of parents recently who are against childhood vaccination. The impact of the decision is massive, not only to their own children, but also to the other children. Parents’ knowledge is the major factor that contribute to their decision for immunisation. Therefore, parents should be well-informed on the purpose of immunisation, so that they would not easily be deceived by anti-vaccinators propaganda, particularly in the social media.

OBJECTIVE: The objective of this study was to evaluate parents’ knowledge on childhood vaccination.

METHODOLOGY

• This prospective study included convenience sampling of 35 parents with children aged less than 7 years old. They were recruited during an open public event.
• Respondents completed a self-administered questionnaires consisted of demographic data, general knowledge about vaccination and specific knowledge about vaccines’ name and related diseases.

RESULT

• Result showed that majority of parents had average general knowledge on immunization. However parents also have inadequate knowledge in certain questions, in which only 27% agree that hepatitis B vaccine is not given in a single dose and only 17% agree that MMR vaccine do not cause autism.
• Most of the parents got the wrong answer for the indication of listed vaccines except for MMR and polio.
• The mean score for general knowledge of immunization and specific knowledge on vaccine and its related diseases were 1.47±0.18 out of 3 and 3.12±1.76 out of 6 respectively.
• However, most parents were aware that immunization programme in Malaysia is permissible in Islam as indicated by its high mean value.

CONCLUSION

General and specific knowledge on childhood immunization were not satisfactory. The findings indicated that there is an ongoing need for a comprehensive educational programme. This programme should be able to target large group of young parents and could be implemented for example during antenatal classes.

REFERENCES