The parents’ choice of non-vaccination of their children: internet information and social media influence on that

Abstract

The contemporary anti-vaccination movement has reigned in England since the 1990s and has spread out to other countries in Europe, USA, Canada, Japan, Australia, among others, with widespread dissemination of anti-vaccination information on the internet and on social media. In Brazil, even with a successful and extensive National Immunization Program, the information coming from the Internet has played an important role in the issues concerning vaccination in some social groups, such as the strata of highly educated and high income families in large cities. This written project aims to discuss the influence of healthcare information, especially information related to vaccination, which can paradoxically generate a population with much more autonomy over their healthcare decision, and at the same time it provides a sense of expertise in the subject, even when facing superficial information or misinformation.

Keywords: immunization, child care, parents, information, social networking

Introduction

The first anti-vaccination movements began in Europe, as a response to public measures of smallpox compulsory vaccination in the second half of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century. The modern anti-vaccination movement, however, reigned in England from 1998, after the publication of Wakefield et al. which suggested an association of the MMR vaccine (measles, mumps and rubella) with autism and intestinal inflammation, a fact that was later revealed to be fraudulent. The article triggered a growing anti-vaccination movement in Europe, USA, Canada, Japan, Australia, among other countries, manifesting mainly through websites and blogs. In this scenario, the information coming from the internet and social media have played an important role in the problematization of the vaccine by some segments of society.

In Brazil, in the 1970s and 1980s, low vaccination coverage was mostly associated with issues related to the low income people access to vaccines. With the expansion and effectiveness of the Brazilian National Immunization Program (PNI), from the 2000s on, vaccine failures were more associated with issues related to the acceptability of vaccination to parents with higher schooling and higher income in large cities. Even given the specificities of the Brazilian context (such as the epidemiological scenario of immunopreventable diseases and the PNI success), information on vaccines and vaccination on the internet and social media has brought the country closer to different realities similar to developed countries.

The influence of information

Information on vaccines, regarding the diseases situation, severity of the diseases that the vaccines immunize or protect from, the composition of the vaccines, side effects, vaccination schedules, among others, have taken a decision-making place for the parents decision not to vaccinate their children. This has been presented in a study carried out with highly educated parents with higher income and residents in Brazil.
expert parents, revealed the selective way in which some parents processed the information pros and contra vaccination, according to the capacity of subjective capture and interest of these subjects.\textsuperscript{7,13}

**Conclusion**

Finally, the Internet and social medias provide access to an exuberant level of information unprecedented in history, unlike other media (such as TV and radio), as there is an active stance on searches and interactions, even if virtually.\textsuperscript{11} It provides a potential process of individual and group autonomy, but paradoxically, the excess of information is not necessarily associated with the apprehension of knowledge and reflexive and critical posture.

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**Conflict of interest**

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**References**


