



Understanding vaccine hesitancy and the role of communication strategies in addressing this

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Outline of this talk



- Vaccine hesitancy and its determinants
- How can communication help to address vaccine hesitancy?
- Conceptualising communication as an intervention
- Introducing the 'Communicate to vaccinate 2' (COMMVAC 2) project

What is vaccine hesitancy?



- The term is used to help understand behaviour in relation to vaccination
- WHO has defined vaccine hesitancy as:
"A behaviour, influenced by a number of factors including:
 - *confidence* (do not trust the vaccine or provider)
 - *complacency* (do not perceive a need for a vaccine or do not value the vaccine), and
 - *convenience* (**access to vaccination services**)" (2013)
- Vaccine-hesitant individuals are a varied group who have varying degrees of indecision about specific vaccines or vaccination in general.
 - Vaccine-hesitant individuals may accept all vaccines but remain concerned about vaccines, some may refuse or delay some vaccines, but accept others; some individuals may refuse all vaccines (WHO 2013)

WHO. What influences vaccine acceptance: a model of determinants of vaccine hesitancy. The SAGE Vaccine Hesitancy Working Group.

Determinants of vaccine hesitancy



- *Contextual influences*, including socio-cultural and health systems factors
- *Individual and group influences*, including those arising from personal perceptions of a vaccine
- *Vaccine or vaccination-specific issues*, including individual assessments of risks and benefits and the effects of the mode of administration



WHO. What influences vaccine acceptance: a model of determinants of vaccine hesitancy. The SAGE Vaccine Hesitancy Working Group.

How can communication help to address vaccine hesitancy?



- An important contributor to vaccine hesitancy in many settings is not being appropriately informed or supported regarding vaccination decisions
- Parents and carers may:
 - Lack knowledge about how vaccination **'works'**, the diseases which vaccines may help prevent and the relevance of **vaccination to their child's health**
 - Need support to help them make a decision
 - Need strategies such as translation to make information accessible
 - Need or want information and support from people in their community, and not just from the health services

How can communication help to address vaccine hesitancy?



- Effective communication between the health services and the parents and caregivers of children can help to address these issues and therefore contribute to reducing vaccine hesitancy
- However, a key challenge is how to integrate evidence-based communication strategies into vaccination programme delivery at scale, particularly where health systems are weak



Communication as a form of intervention



- Widely acknowledged that communication is central to interactions between users and providers of health services
- Childhood vaccination is no exception:
 - Communication strategies are integral to most vaccination strategies
 - Communication is a key determinant of childhood vaccination uptake worldwide – poor communication may undermine vaccination programmes
 - Communication is also key to achieving the wider goal of knowledgeable parents and communities – important contributors to improving child health
- We therefore need to recognise communication as a discrete part of health care delivery and interactions

What is a communication intervention (1)?



A *purposeful, structured, repeatable, adaptable* and *evaluable* strategy to inform and influence individual and community decisions

These decisions may be in relation to personal and public health participation, disease prevention and promotion, policy making, service improvement and research

From: Hill S (ed). *The knowledgeable patient. Communication and participation in health.* Chichester: Wiley. 2011.



What is a communication intervention (2)?



Purposeful	Has a specific aim <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For example: to inform or educate caregivers about vaccination; to build skills to use health information
Formalised	Has core content, a specific mode of delivery, and an explicit format and timing
Repeatable	Can be reproduced for all relevant people or groups
Adaptable	To specific circumstances or contexts, such as low literacy or different languages
Evaluable	Evidence on its impacts can be obtained and synthesized

From: Hill S (ed). The knowledgeable patient. Communication and participation in health. Chichester: Wiley. 2011.

Communication in the context of vaccination



- May operate at individual, community or societal levels
- May target people in their role as parents, caregivers or community members
- May have a range of purposes

Purposes of vaccination communication

To inform or educate

To remind or recall

To teach skills

To provide support

To facilitate decision making

To enable communication

To enhance community ownership

The 'Communicate to vaccinate 2' (COMMVAC 2) project



COMMVAC 2 is exploring how to integrate evidence-based communication strategies that are adapted for local conditions into vaccination programmes

COMMVAC 2 aims to:

- *build research knowledge and capacity* to use evidence-based strategies for improving communication about childhood vaccinations with parents and communities in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs)
- build the evidence needed to support the *implementation* of effective communication interventions
- *translate* this evidence into guidance for policymakers in LMICs on vaccination communication strategies

The focus is on low income settings, and fieldwork has been conducted in Nigeria, Mozambique and Cameroon



Organising communication according to its purpose



- When we started the COMMVAC work, we were unable to identify a robust way of organising the wide range of vaccination communication interventions used globally
- Organising these interventions according to their purpose can help to clarify why a particular communication intervention is used
- We developed the COMMVAC taxonomy of vaccination communication interventions
- This taxonomy – a classification system based on conceptual similarities – groups vaccination communication interventions according to their purpose

COMMVAC taxonomy of vaccination communication interventions



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From effectiveness to implementation.....



- Previous COMMVAC work looked at evidence for the effectiveness of different vaccination communication interventions
- The current work examines how these interventions and strategies are being implemented, and the factors affecting implementation at scale in low income settings
- This will be the focus of several of the presentations today

Thanks!

