



Limiting Vaccine Resistance: How Using CASE Improved the Ability of Nurses to Transmit Positive Vaccine Messages in Suffolk County, NY

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Background

- Immunization hesitancy is becoming more frequent among parents of children of all ages
- Nurses are frequently the professionals who answer questions about immunizations
- The data clearly indicates that nurses are trusted professionals and that parents believe the information provided to them by nurses
- The data also indicates that vaccine hesitancy has had an impact on immunization levels in the U.S
- There has been a resurgence of vaccine preventable diseases in the US as evidenced by pertussis epidemics in several states and outbreaks of measles and mumps in others
- Studies indicate that how immunization information is presented to parents and care givers can affect a parent's decision to vaccinate^{1,2}
- Studies indicate that parents fall into three groups: 1.) Those that do not question vaccines; 2.) Those who oppose vaccines at all costs regardless of any information provided to them by a health care provider; and 3.) Those who can be influenced by information provided to them by a health care provider
- It is this third group that nurses hope to reach
- All too often nurses are not equipped to answer parents' questions and nurses may even question the vaccines themselves
- Vaccine hesitancy and refusal are endangering the community by leaving not just those who choose to either delay or refuse vaccines, but also those who for medical reasons are unable to be vaccinated
- Nurses need to see these questions not with disdain but as an opportunity to educate
- An improved paradigm for relaying immunization information has been developed which relies on the nurse's ability to 'connect' on an emotional level with the parent by finding common ground on which both the parent and nurse can begin the discussion

Setting

This immunization teaching paradigm was presented to nurses in various settings;

- Immunization clinics
- Community health centers
- Private providers' offices
- Day care centers
- Pre-kindergarten programs
- Libraries
- Schools

Located in a suburban county



Population

- Nurses who work in a variety of settings such as;
 - Immunization clinics
 - Community health centers
 - Private providers' offices
 - Day care centers
 - Pre-kindergarten programs
 - Libraries
- The children under the nurses' care presenting with their parents for immunizations
- The parents and care givers of these children
- 200 nurses were taught the paradigm
- These nurses will be teaching the parents of the children.



Project Description

- Nurses are experiencing larger numbers of parents who are resistant to immunizations
- It is becoming increasingly difficult for nurses to convince some parents to comply with immunization regulations
- Data^{1,2} indicates that most parents who have reservations regarding immunizations will allow their children to be vaccinated after speaking with a health care professional who is most often a nurse
- A paradigm has been developed which gives nurses a tool to systematically discuss immunizations
- The CASE method³ enlists the use of empathy and common ground to begin conversations, progresses to the science, and then concludes with nurse's advice to vaccinate
- Studies consistently show that parents trust their children's health care providers in these matters.
- Information on vaccines should be provided in a proactive rather than reactive atmosphere
- CASE is a four step framework for communicating immunization science. The paradigm consists of these four steps:
 - 1.) **Corroborate:** acknowledge the parent's concerns and find some point on which to agree. This sets the tone for the discussion;
 - 2.) **About me:** describe what one has done to build a knowledge base and expertise;
 - 3.) **Science:** describe what the science says;
 - 4.) **Explain/advise:** give advice to the parent/patient based on the science.
- Anticipate parents/patients concerns and answer questions before they are asked
- This project was developed to share this framework with nurses in Suffolk County when speaking with parents about immunizations
- This paradigm was developed by Alison Singer, president of the Autism Science Foundation. She believes that if parents could find common ground with their children's nurses, the parents would be more receptive to listening to the scientific evidence refuting causal links between vaccines and autism and other purported conditions
- Nurses are uniquely placed to provide needed information to help parents make appropriate immunization choices for their children.

Results/Lessons Learned

- The nurses were very enthusiastic about the CASE paradigm and incorporated CASE into their teaching about vaccines
- In light of local outbreaks of disease the nurses hope fewer cases of vaccine preventable diseases will be introduced into the community due to a highly immunized population of children
- If the nurses use CASE, fewer parents will refuse immunizations or request delayed schedules based on data from other areas of the country where it has been introduced
- Anecdotal feedback indicates that parents are opting to fully vaccinate their children following the use of CASE
- No data was collected because that would have required a full submission for IRB
- In the future a full randomized control trial may be considered

Selected References

1. [Austin H, Campion-Smith C, Thomas S, Ward W.](#) Parents' difficulties with decisions about childhood immunisation. *Community Practice*. 2008 Oct;81(10):32-5.
2. [Leask J, Chapman S, Hawe P, Burgess M.](#) What maintains parental support for vaccination when challenged by anti-vaccination messages? A qualitative study. *Vaccine*. 2006 Nov 30;24(49-50):7238-45. Epub 2006 May 23.
3. Alison Singer, Autism Science Foundation, "Making the CASE for Vaccines: Communicating Vaccine Safety Data to Parents," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Immunization Conference, April 21, 2010.

