

PERCEPTION OF THE ANTI-VACCINE MOVEMENTS ACTIVITY AND THE IMMUNIZATION PERFORMANCE IN WARSAW UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Załęski A1, Krupa A.2, Szwejkowska M.1,2, Kuchar E.1, Nitsch-Osuch A.2

¹ Klinika Pediatrii z Oddziałem Obserwacyjnym WUM Department of Pediatrics with Clinical Assessment Unit

² Zakład Medycyny Społecznej i Zdrowia Publicznego WUM Department of Social Medicine and Public Health, Medical University of Warsaw, Warsaw

Background

Vaccines are a significant achievement in medicine - thanks to preventive vaccinations, the incidence of infectious diseases significantly decreased and we achieved smallpox eradication. In recent years, the popularity of anti-vaccine movements has been increasing worldwide. This trend has become the motivation to examine the relationship between the perception of the activity of anti-vaccine movements and the performance of immunization among students of the University of Warsaw. The availability of data regarding this topic is still insufficient. Material and methods We conducted the original survey, conducted in February 2018, on a representative sample of 120 students from various departments of the University of Warsaw. The study was voluntary and auditory. The questionnaire consisted of 21 questions.

Results

The study included 100 respondents (37 males), with an average age of 22 years, from 22 different faculties of the Warsaw University. The majority of respondents (69%) declare that they have met ideas promoted by anti-vaccine movements, most often on the Internet (45%), less often in other mass media. Respondents stated in 89% of cases that the ideas promoted by anti-vaccine movements have no impact on their decision to perform preventive vaccination, and only in 3% of respondents these ideas were the reasons for the resignation from the part of the immunizations. The vast majority of the surveyed students (82%) supports preventive vaccinations. Almost all respondents (93%) declare that they have undergone all mandatory vaccinations. Less preferred are non-obligatory vaccines (37%). 87% of students claim that they will vaccinate their children according to the vaccination program.

Conclusions

The results of the study suggest that the ideas promoted by anti-vaccine movements are known among the students of the Warsaw University, but have little impact on the respondents' point of view. The vast majority of students supports the immunization and perform it. In recent years, despite the ongoing educational campaigns, the upward tendency to refuse mandatory vaccinations has not been stopped. There is still a necessity to continue the spread of reliable knowledge about the low risk of vaccinations side effects and the high risk of diseases acquisition resulting from the refusal of vaccination.