

KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PRACTICE TOWARDS VACCINATION: A CROSS SECTIONAL STUDY AMONG THE PARENTS IN SUNGAI PETANI, KEDAH, MALAYSIA.

ABSTRACT

Parents play a prominent role in vaccinating their children as they are the sole decision makers. Parent's perceptions and hesitancy towards vaccination act as a barrier towards the proper provision of scheduled vaccination. Current study included 396 parents and was conducted at Sungai Petani, Malaysia. The aim of the study was to evaluate parent's knowledge, attitude and practice towards childhood vaccination and to explore the factors associated with non-adherence of parents to the mandatory vaccination schedule. Validated questionnaire was used as an instrument for evaluating parent's knowledge, attitude and practice regarding childhood vaccination. Data obtained was classified based on Bloom's cut-off point for knowledge, attitude and practice. For the analysis of data SPSS version 20 was used and p -value of <0.05 was considered statistically significant. Out of 396 parents, a high percentage of females (42.8%) were having good knowledge with a mean rank score of 7.00 ± 2.04 in comparison to male respondents (36.2%). Significantly moderate positive association ($\Phi = 0.359$, p -value < 0.001) was found based on education level of respondents. Parents living at urban area 133(51.8%) in comparison to those living at rural area 42(30.2%) were having good practice of vaccination. Number of children has significant effects on the parent's practice towards vaccination (p -value > 0.001). Ethnicity (p -value = 0.015) and religion (p -value = 0.020) shows significant association with parent's practice but it shows no impact on parental attitude. Parent's income has prominent impact on the parent's attitude and can be considered as a potential barrier in the provision of proper immunization of children against

fatal diseases ($\Phi = 0.329$, $p\text{-value} < 0.001$). On the basis of overall response of parents, only 27 (6.8%) of total parents mentioned that they haven't vaccinated their children according to the schedule. There is gap between the practices and attitude of parents from different localities with different standard of livings ($p\text{-value} 0.037$). Racial disparities considered as a worrying factor in parents' decisions about vaccinating their children, but current study shows no such addressable factor related to races. Regional inequity, unavailability of facilities and hard to access childcare centers need to be addressed. Educational level of parents and income status of family has a defining role in the provision of scheduled vaccination. Educating parents through interactive mass media awareness campaigns can be helpful in eliminating public health issues related to vaccine preventable diseases. Involving influential figures from religious sector can improve the parents' trust towards vaccinating their children.