

Improving Immunisation Rates

Increasing Immunisation rates to achieve 95% coverage, can achieve herd immunity within our population and stop the spread of life-threatening diseases (Ministry of Health, 2014b). For this reason, the Ministry of Health has made improving immunisation rates and timeliness a health target for 2015, making this an important practice issue for nurses (Ministry of Health, 2014a).

Many factors influence parents decisions to immunise their children, including misinformation, education and fear (Goodyear-smith, Pertousis-Harris, Soe & Turner, 2005). This poster displays a review of the literature on this issue, based around the research question 'What strategies and other factors, used by immunisation providers, positively influence the decision to immunise in parents and caregivers of children of immunisation age?'.

Influencing Factor - Misinformation

One in five parents are unsure of whether immunisations are safe, or if they're even important (Kennedy, Basket and Sheedy, 2011). One quarter of parents are concerned their child's immune system can't handle the vaccines in the schedule (Gellin et al, cited in Kennedy et al., 2011).

◇ Nurses can provide accurate and factual information about immunisations, as they are seen by parents as being a trusted and unbiased source (Hill & Cox, 2013).

◇ If nurses enquire what parents main concerns are, they may be able to correct misinformation and reduce the fear caused by it.

Influencing Factor - The Childs Pain

One of the most common concerns amongst parents in the amount of pain their child feels during immunisations (Kennedy et al., 2011).

◇ There are many strategies nurses can use to reduce the severity and duration of pain during immunisation, including:

- Distraction - play, cuddling, blowing bubbles
- Breastfeeding
- Rapid Injection—most painful vaccine last
- Giving sucrose solution (infants)
- Use of topical anaesthetics

(Russel & Harrison, 2015)

Continuing Education of Nurses

Many statistics support the need for nurses to maintain their knowledge and education around immunisations:

- Increasing nurses knowledge of immunisations increases immunisation rates (Uskun, Uskun, Uysalgenc & Mehmet, 2008).
- Nurses that are confident in their knowledge and practice are associated with higher immunisation rates (Desmond, Grant, Goodyear-smith, Turner & Pertousis-Harris, 2011).
- Knowledge gaps create opportunities for parental confusion and lower immunisation rates (Desmond et al., 2011).

Reduce Missed Opportunities

A missed opportunity for immunisation is any visit to the GP or practice nurse where the patient hasn't received an immunisation they are due for, despite having no contraindications (Uskun et al., 2008).

Nurses can avoid missed opportunities by increasing knowledge of contraindications. This is evidenced by:

- Twenty percent of providers would incorrectly withhold the measles mumps and rubella vaccine (MMR) for a mild upper respiratory tract infection (Goodyear-smith et al., 2005).
- A majority of immunisation providers would withhold MMR due to an egg allergy, despite this not being a contraindication (Goodyear-smith et al., 2005).

References

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Rationale

I have chosen to create a poster to convey the information and recommendations from my literature review. A written submission would be inappropriate for the findings of this research review, as my recommendations are not related to large scale policy or law change brought about by a single person. The Ministry of Health is already focussed on doing everything they can to improve immunisation rates, which is evidenced by one of the Ministries Health Targets for 2015 being to achieve 95% immunisation coverage of eight month olds (Ministry of Health, 2014). Instead, my recommendations are focussed on techniques and strategies that nurses and other immunisation providers can incorporate into their practice to improve immunisation rates. These recommendations are most useful being shared with practice nurses who may be able to take from it some ideas to implement changes into their personal practice. For this reason, a poster is the more suitable medium for summarising my recommendations to this wider audience.

PECOT - Research Question Development

PECOT category	Information relating to question	Explanation
Population	Immunisation providers that interact with parent/caregivers of children of immunisation age.	These are the practitioners that are informing and advising parents and caregivers about immunisations and can influence their decisions. Information about all immunisation providers is likely to be relevant to nursing practice.
Exposure (intervention)	Immunisation provider's strategies and factors that positively influence compliance of parents and caregivers to immunise their children	The strategies that an immunisation provider uses, or other factors related to the provider's practice, may be able to positively influence parent/caregiver's decisions about immunisations for their children.
Comparison / Control	Immunisation providers that do not actively attempt to positively influence immunisation compliance.	This is evidenced by a higher level of compliance related to practitioners that actively implement strategies to improve immunisation.
Outcome	Increased immunisation rates related to practitioners that implement the identified strategies.	The strategies and other factors that are identified as being effective in improving immunisation compliance, will positively correlate with higher immunisation rates from the practitioners that implement them.
Time	N/A	

Schnieder, Z., & Whitehead, D. (2013). Identifying research ideas, questions, statements and hypotheses. In Z. Schneider, & D. Whitehead (Eds.), *Nursing and midwifery research: Methods and appraisal for evidence-based practice* (pp. 57-76). New South Wales, Australia: Elsevier.

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