

Editorial

Parental Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy for children

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Vaccine hesitancy (VH) is the delay in acceptance or refusal of vaccination despite availability of vaccination services¹. Universal Covid-19 vaccination is considered as the key measure to limit the spread of SARS-CoV-2 and the risk of the emergence of new variants². Parental VH is the parents' delay in acceptance or refusal of vaccines despite their availability for their children and is an important obstacle to vaccination³. Alfieri NL, *et al*⁴ found that more than one in three parents in the USA were vaccine-hesitant for their children. In China 52.5% of parents were vaccine-hesitant for their children⁵. A Bangladesh study found that 42.8% of parents were vaccine-hesitant for their children⁶. In contrast, a study in Brazil, found that only 9% of parents were vaccine-hesitant for their children⁷.

In the Bangladesh study⁶, binary logistic regression showed that children's age, parents' age, religion, occupation, monthly household income, permanent address, current living location, tobacco use, adherence to government paediatric vaccination programmes (other than Covid-19), perception about Covid-19 vaccine effectiveness for children in Bangladesh, self-vaccine hesitancy, loss of a family member due to Covid-19, and perceived Covid-19 threat could independently predict parental VH for children less than 18 years old. Alfieri NL, *et al*⁴ found lower odds of VH in parents who used family, internet and healthcare providers as sources of information about Covid-19, compared to parents not using these sources⁵. Zakeri M, *et al*⁸ found that hesitant mothers do not perceive Covid-19 infection as a serious threat to their children and were more concerned about the safety, efficacy and side effects of Covid-19 vaccine.

The risks of Covid-19 infection in children and adolescents include a low risk of multisystemic inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C)⁹ and long Covid¹⁰ as well as educational disruptions. Adolescent Covid-19 vaccination data highlight the relative safety of the Covid-19 vaccines so far administered¹¹. Minor side effects after vaccination include pain at the injection site and some mild flu-like symptoms. There have been reports of rare cases of myocarditis and pericarditis in adolescents, mostly males, especially following the second vaccination dose¹². Disinformation about the rare but serious side effects of the vaccines may have increased hesitancy towards the safety of COVID-19 vaccination¹³. Even though the rate of deaths


possibly due to Covid-19 vaccination is extremely low, the rising amount of false propaganda on social media is generating serious confusion and insecurity among the people regarding the vaccine safety, efficacy and side effects¹⁴.

Zakeri M, *et al*⁸ found that the strongest stimulation to combat mothers' VH is adequate information about the vaccines being provided. A study conducted in Turkey also indicated that the strongest cue to action for them was enough information about the vaccine being provided¹⁵. Zakeri M, *et al*⁸ found that the doctors' recommendation was the second strong stimulus for enhancing the vaccine uptake among the mothers who had no intention to vaccinate their children.

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