

A Kap Study of Mothers about the Expanded Program of Immunization

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Summary:

Background: to take certain measures that may improve the compliance and delivery of vaccination to eligible children. Since 1978, the expanded program of immunization has achieved dramatic results in controlling communicable diseases in children. Data about mothers' knowledge and attitude about vaccination are not available in Iraq.

Methods: A cross sectional study was carried out in Nov-Dec 2001 to check the level of knowledge of a sample of Iraqi mothers about the expanded program of vaccination. A total of 552 mothers were included in the study from 25 public health centers in Baghdad. Both mothers & PHC centers were chosen by simple random techniques.

Results: Results showed that 43.8% of mothers obtained high score of knowledge, while 42.2% and 13.9% registered medium and low scores of knowledge respectively. Some variables relevant to this issue were studied as well.

Conclusion: We can conclude from this study that about half of the mothers have good knowledge about vaccination regarding it's importance, schedule and practice while the other half have unsatisfactory information, this calls for serious efforts to increase the level of knowledge and attitude

Keywords: EPI, mother, Knowledge, vaccines, children

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Introduction:

Since 1978, the expanded program of immunization has achieved dramatic results in controlling communicable diseases in children less than 5 years of age by decreasing both morbidity and mortality¹.

To our knowledge, data about mothers' knowledge and attitude about vaccination are not available in Iraq. Such information is urgently needed to address the role of mothers in this aspect, and to take certain measures that may improve the compliance and delivery of vaccination to eligible children.

Materials and Methods

This is a cross-sectional study carried out to show mothers' knowledge about expanded program of immunization (EPI); a KAP study. The study was carried out from October to December 2001 as a practical training for fourth year undergraduate medical students of Al-Mustansiriya Medical College. An interview was carried out with a total sample of 552 mothers, randomly selected from 25 health centers. The questionnaire used included fields for mother's age, residency, education, and husband education.

Mothers' knowledge on vaccination was also assessed through several questions providing information about different vaccines (BCG, triple vaccine, polio, hepatitis, measles and MMR), and about number of visits, booster doses, and goal of immunizing children, and scoring the information according to predefined scoring system.

Mothers were also asked about the source of their information about vaccinations and the difficulties they experienced during immunizing their children.

Results

Table 1: Vaccination status of children in families studied

Families	All children vaccinated	Not all children Vaccinated
No.	491	61
%	88.9%	11.1%

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Score	<= 3	4-7	8-10
No.	77	233	242
%	13.9%	42.2%	43.8%

Table 2: Mothers knowledge score on vaccination, in sample studied.

Figure 1: Parental education of families studied.

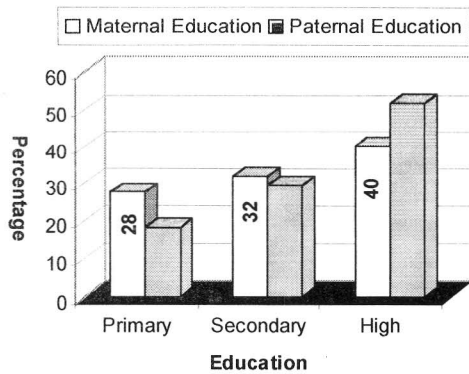


Figure 2: Information source about the booking date of vaccines.

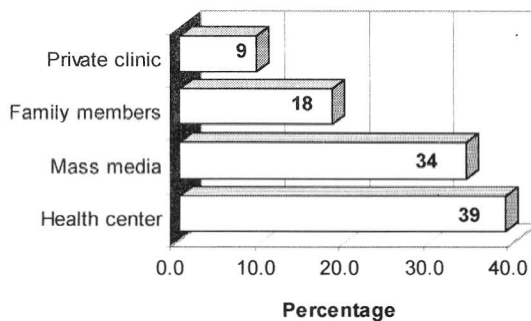
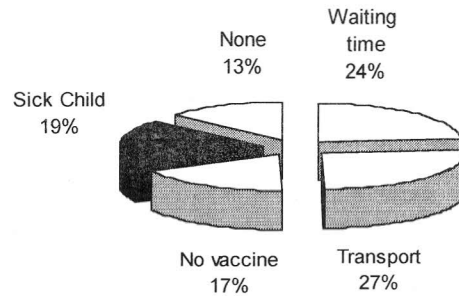


Figure 3: Vaccination difficulties facing mothers studied.



Discussion

The new approach in conducting health programs and guaranteeing their success is through the effective participation of parents (especially mothers). In these programs, the success of which is closely related to mothers' knowledge and participation in achieving vaccination of young children in the proper time and according to schedule².

In this study, most of the children were fully vaccinated (89%), which is generally less than the coverage rate in other countries (table 1) like Italy where a similar study was carried out.

Around (40%) of the mothers were had higher education while the other (60%) were had either secondary or primary education (figure 1). In a similar study carried out in Ninavah province, the education level of mothers was poor, 13% only had higher education, 50% some education, and the rest were illiterate³.

The score of mothers' knowledge in this study was low (<= 3) in 13.9%, medium (4-7) in 42.2%, and good (8-10) in 43.8% (table 2). These results are relatively good when compared with the study in Ninavah in 2001, where the scoring level was much less than in this study.

The source of information for the mothers (figure 2) was mainly through the health centers (39%), mass media (34%), a family members 18%, and private clinics 9%. In other studies, 70% of mothers gained their knowledge from pediatricians mass, media (30%), pamphlets (24%), and family physicians (19%). Other studies concluded that the main source of information was medical practitioners, family beliefs,⁴ and video tapes⁵.

Regarding vaccination difficulties, about a quarter of the surveyed mothers claimed that shortage of time is the main obstacle (figure 3), and another quarter blamed poor communication. On the other hand, 19%

referred it to illness of the child during the scheduled vaccination and 17% blamed the unavailability of vaccines in the health centers. However, 13% of mothers did not experience any difficulty. This was in agreement with other studies, which reported that the main obstacles were shortage or inconvenience of the scheduled time, and long waiting list, and lack of information about this subject .We can conclude from this study that about half the mothers have good knowledge about vaccination and its importance, and its schedule while the other half have unsatisfactory information. This demands serious efforts to increase the level of knowledge and attitude using mass media, group discussion, and counseling courses and other tools to raise the sense of awareness of mothers and families about this extremely vital aspect of promoting child health.

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