Talking to parents about vaccine concerns

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Disclosure

I have no real or perceived conflicts of interest personally or professionally that relate to this presentation.
Greetings from Austin
Home of Whole Foods International Headquarters
Home of Andy Wakefield

Controversial autism doctor: ‘I’m not going away’
Question #1: How did we get here?
Is it the media’s fault?

Newsweek

CRAZY TALK
OPRAH, WACKY CURES & YOU

JUNE 8, 2009

BY WESTON MEDITA AND PAT WINKER
JENNY MCCARTHY'S AUTISM FIGHT

BOYS ARE MORE LIKELY THAN GIRLS TO BE DIAGNOSED WITH AUTISM

COMPATIBLE* WITH ITS GOAL OF QUICKLY MAKING THE ITALIAN
The Internet?

*On the Internet, nobody knows you’re a dog.*
Sign an on-line petition to open vaccine databases to independent researchers!

NVIC Responds to Institute of Medicine Report: Vaccines and Autism

Free E-News and Newsletters

Welcome!

Vaccines or immunizations are recommended for every child born in the United States. Vaccinations shouldn’t hurt a child but sometimes they do. Before your child takes the risk, find out what it is.
ARE WE TO BLAME?
How much time do we spend talking about vaccines?

- Nurses: 9.2 minutes
- Pediatricians: 3.9 minutes
- Family Practitioners: 3.1 minutes
PARENT PARANOIA
Mellisa Williamson, 35, a Bullitt Avenue resident, worries about the effect on her unborn child from the sound of jackhammers.
Question #2: How do parents approach vaccine decisions?
Analysis of mothers’ decision-making about vaccines for infants: the importance of trust

Pediatrics, 117 (5) 2006
4 Types of Parents

- Believers
- Relaxed
- Cautious
- Unconvinced
VACCINE KNOWLEDGE

- All parents had poor knowledge of vaccines
- Only 2 moms could name one vaccine given at the two-month well check at the follow-up interview
- 3 moms listed autism as a known side effect of the MMR vaccine
- Sources of info: Internet, books, Mothering Magazine
“The pediatrician respected the fact that we wanted to sit and talk for an hour and a half about vaccinations...he stayed very late one night...it wasn’t something that they could charge us for...and it’s a very busy practice.”
“Doctors don’t have the answers for me to these specific questions about vaccination…I don’t think they have the time or motivations to find me the answers..”
Vaccinators

- #1: Trust their doctor
- Feel satisfied with discussion
- Feel that vaccinating is the norm
- Believe in the social contract
- Want to prevent disease
Non-Vaccinators

- Feel alienated by the doctor (poor communication, condescending)
- Have a previous medical experience leading to mistrust (misdiagnosis)
- Distrust info or motives (doc does not know and makes money on vax)
- Trust a homeopath or naturopath
Non-vaccinators

- Believe that vax-preventable diseases are rare, not serious, or easily treatable
- Worry about adverse effects
- Feel that their child is not at risk because others vaccinate (free-riding)
Parental Vaccine Safety Concerns in 2009

Key Findings

- 90% of parents agree that vaccines protect their kids & follow doc’s advice
- 54% worry about serious effects
- 25% believe some vaccines cause autism
- Moms are more concerned/more likely to refuse vaccines
Question #3: When did anti-vaccine sentiment start?
As the World Turns

- 1796: Smallpox vaccine
- 1821: England requires
- 1830’s: Antivaxxers arrive
- 1998: MMR study
- 1999: Thimerosal concerns
- 2001: T-free vaccines
But wait, there’s more…

- **2004**: IOM reports on MMR/ thimerosal
- **Sept 2007**: Jenny McCarthy
- **Oct 2007**: Dr Bob Sears
- **Mar 2008**: Hannah Poling awarded compensation for Mitochondrial d/o
"The reports and advice given to the [family] by Dr. Krigsman and some other physicians ... have been very wrong... Unfortunately, [they have] been misled by physicians who are guilty, in my view, of gross medical misjudgment."

—Special Master Hastings
February 2010

- Wakefield found guilty of 30 counts of medical misconduct
- Lancet retracts study
- Resignation from Thoughtful House
March 2010: Omnibus #2

“The theory of vaccine-related causation is scientifically unsupportable.”
May 2010
Question #4: Where are we today?
Are we done yet?
No, but we’re doing well!

<1% of kids 19—35 months are not vaccinated

NIS survey 2009
Question #5:  
How do we win the PR Battle?
It’s a team effort

- Immunization Alliance
- Traditional Media
- Social Media
- Exam Room 1
Public Opinion Survey 08

• Most effective message: “I want what is best for my child and my patients. That’s why I recommend vaccinating.”
Messaging

• **WANT** to be listened to and respected.
• **WANT** to be respected they want what’s in child’s best interest.
• **WANT** explanation from trusted source.
• **DON’T WANT** scare tactics.
• **DON’T WANT** to be scolded.
What determines credibility?
In LOW concern settings
Randall Hver, NIC, 2005.
What determines credibility?
In HIGH concern settings
Randall Hver. NIC, 2005

- Honesty 15%
- Listening/Empathy 50%
- Expertise 15%
- Other 20%
Great Communicators

- Know their audience.
- Talk WITH them.
- Care about them.
- Don’t argue.
- Don’t show contempt for reasoning.
- Seek common ground.
- Listen.
What YOU can do

✓ Prenatal visit
✓ Develop trust
✓ Offer reliable sources for more info
✓ Offer your expertise to the media
✓ Practice what you preach
✓ DON’T GET DEFENSIVE
Question #6: How do I address vaccine myths?
MYTH #1

Vaccine preventable diseases are rare, not serious, and treatable.
REALITY:

- **Measles** outbreak 2008
- **HIB** outbreak 2008/09 (5 deaths)
- **Mumps** outbreak 2009/10 (1500 cases/2 had meningitis, 5 pancreatitis, 55 testiculitis)
- **H1N1** outbreak (~60 million/12k deaths)
- **Pertussis** outbreak 2009/10 (10 deaths)
MYTH #2

Too many shots, too soon.
REALITY:

• Thank goodness we have more shots.
• These are safer and smarter vaccines.
• Smallpox, oral polio, DTwP
• It may look like more shots, but the immune load is actually LESS.
MYTH #3

• Thimerosal causes autism.
REALITY

Rates of Autism still rising.
MYTH #4

- MMR causes autism.
REALITY

Japan switched from MMR to separate vaccines in 1993.
Autism rates still rising.
Reality: Causes of Autism

- Genetic: several defects, including Fragile X
- Fathers over age 40
- Extreme prematurity (<25 weeks)
- Medications during pregnancy
MYTH #5

• It’s all a government conspiracy to protect Big Pharma and inject cancer-causing agents into our children.
REALITY:

This would be the largest worldwide conspiracy in history. Just ask your doc if she vaccinates her child.
MYTH #6: We need to green our vaccines
REALITY

• Aluminum is the #1 metal in the earth’s crust.
• It’s in our water, soil, and food (including breastmilk)… and our deoderant.
• The amount is scant compared to our daily exposures.
MYTH #7:

• It’s safer to use an alternative or staggered vaccination schedule
REALITY

• Delaying vaccinations leaves the most susceptible at risk.
• “My schedule doesn’t have any research behind it. No one has ever studied a big group of kids using my schedule to determine if it’s safe or if it has any benefits.”—Dr Bob Sears
Vaccine information

- cdc.gov/vaccines/conversations
- aap.org
- vaccine.chop.edu
- immunize.org
- baby411.com
“I’m mad as hell and I’m not gonna take this anymore!”
Teaching Moments

Build a relationship, develop trust, and educate!