UNDERSTANDING HOW PARENTS MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT THEIR CHILDREN’S VACCINATIONS

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Methods

- **Data:**
  - Formal interviews with 18 sets of parents (15 mothers, 3 couples)
    - US-born parents with children ≤18 months of age
    - Residents of King County, WA

- **Analysis:**
  - Grounded theory
  - Results verified with 8 sets of parents (4 participants, 4 non-participants)
The decision-making process

Pre-decision Making Factors

- Awareness
- Assessing
- Choosing
- Stasis
- Re-assessing

Ongoing Assessment
Assessing

Assessing Continuum

Degree of Assessing

Accepting

Relying

Searching
Accepting group

- Assessing is minimal

- Primary consideration is the general social norm of vaccination

- Do not investigate vaccination per se, instead assume there is one option:

  It wasn’t something that I spent a lot of time thinking about because I just assumed that it was a no brainer . . . . I knew I was going to do it and I knew I had to do it.
Relying group

- Social norms are still important

  *Everyone I know has gotten their kids vaccinated . . . and that’s kind of a big influence, you know, just seeing that everyone else is doing this.*

- Assessing primarily focuses on relying on others—friends, family members, health care providers, etc.—for information and advice

- Not often critical of information or advice received
Searching group

- Not concerned about social norms
  
  *Parent 1:* People tell us that we’re privileged to make this decision, that we shouldn’t do it. But I’m like he’s our kid so we’re going to make the best decision we can for him.

  *Parent 2:* Yeah and not because of any society pressure.

- Research themselves
  - Rely less on others for advice, insights or information
  - Focus on published resources

- Consider multiple perspectives and are highly critical of the information they consider
The decision-making process

Pre-decision Making Factors

- Awareness
- Assessing
- Choosing
- Re-assessing
- Stasis
- Ongoing Assessment
Implications

- Suggests that heterogeneity exists in how parents make vaccination decisions
  - Assessing group membership is important
  - Different interventions will be needed for the different groups

- Common reasons for reassessment should be targeted
Individual-level assessment

- Ask parents
  - Have you made a decision about vaccinating your child?
  - How have you made that decision?

- Any concerns can then be addressed at the appropriate level of assessment
Community-level assessment

- **Survey**
  - **Results for King County**
    
    |                | acceptors | reliers | searchers | total |
    |----------------|-----------|---------|-----------|-------|
    | conformers¹    | 16        | 108     | 2         | 126   |
    | nonconformers¹ | 0         | 62      | 8         | 70    |

- **Guesstimate based on knowledge of community**
  - **Trends**
    - Younger, less educated, single parents are more likely to be acceptors
    - Searchers are more likely to be older, better educated and stay-at-home parents
    - Clustering may suggest large presence of reliers
Tailoring interventions to specific groups

- **Acceptors:**
  - Both health care providers and public health agencies can reinforce social norms

- **Reliers:**
  - Health care providers can become members of parents’ networks
  - Public health agencies can target messages to the larger community and specific groups
Influence of others

The chart shows the percentage of network members who recommended non-conformity grouped by the percent of parents. The x-axis represents the percentage of network members who recommended non-conformity, and the y-axis represents the percent of parents. The chart compares conformers and non-conformers.

- **0-25%**: A significant number of parents are in the 0-25% range, indicating that many network members recommended non-conformity in this category.
- **26-50%**: There is a moderate number of parents in the 26-50% range.
- **51-75%**: A smaller number of parents fall into this category, showing less recommendation for non-conformity.
- **76-100%**: A minimal number of parents are in the 76-100% range, indicating a limited number of network members recommended non-conformity.
People network characteristics

Conforming parent:
- Friend
- Spouse/partner
- Health care provider
- Family member

Non-conforming parent:
- Friend
- Spouse/partner
- Health care provider
Tailoring interventions to specific groups

- **Acceptors:**
  - Both health care providers and public health agencies can reinforce social norms

- **Reliers:**
  - Health care providers can become members of parents’ networks
  - Public health agencies can target messages to the larger community and specific groups

- **Searchers:**
  - Health care providers can act as resources
  - Public health agencies can provide resources
Reasons for reassessment

- Transitioning to vaccinating
  - School entry
  - Travel to foreign countries
  - Health scares (pertussis outbreak, H1N1 outbreak)

- Transitioning to not vaccinating
  - Having children experience bad reactions to vaccines
  - Concerns about the number or timing of vaccines
Questions?