Parental Knowledge and Attitudes about Immunization

Findings from the 2011 Los Angeles County Health Survey (LACHS)

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In this issue:

**WHAT DO PARENTS THINK? KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES ABOUT IMMUNIZATION**

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For additional information about the LA County Health Survey, visit: www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ha

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Introduction

• Dramatic reduction in vaccine-preventable diseases is one of the greatest public health achievements in US.

• Routine vaccination of each US birth cohort prevents approximately 20 million cases of illness and 42,000 deaths.

• Vaccination results in net savings of nearly $14 billion in direct costs and $69 billion in total societal costs in United States.
Percent of Kindergarten Enrollees up-to-date with Immunizations, Los Angeles County (LAC) and California (CA), 2002-2014

¶ up-to-date: Kindergarten enrollee has received 4+ DTaP/DTP, 3+ Polio, 2 MMR, 3 Hep B, and 1 Varicella (or physician-documented Varicella Disease).

Data source: DPH Immunization Program.
Percent of Kindergarten Enrollees up-to-date with Immunizations, Los Angeles County (LAC), 2002-2014

14% not fully immunized:
- 0.1% medical exemption
- 1.6% PBEs
- 12.3% conditional entrants

up-to-date: Kindergarten enrollee has received 4+ DTaP/DTP, 3+ Polio, 2 MMR, 3 Hep B, and 1 Varicella (or physician-documente Varicella Disease).

Data source: DPH Immunization Program.
Why Do Some Parents Choose Not to Vaccinate Their Children?

- Perceived low risk of contracting vaccine-preventable diseases
- Rapidly expanded immunization schedule for infants and toddlers
- Increased reports of adverse events after immunization
- Fear flamed by the debunked claims that vaccines may cause autism
- Public attention shift from benefits to risks of vaccination
- Media’s focus on vaccine-related controversies
Clustering: Percent of Kindergarteners with Personal Belief Exemptions by Service Planning Area, 2014-15 School Year

Data source: DPH Immunization Program.
What’s Happening

• Clustering of underimmunized or unimmunized populations contributes to the outbreaks.

• Outbreaks of measles and pertussis have occurred in recent years.

• Recent measles outbreak sickened 28 LAC residents.
Parental knowledge and attitudes about immunization strongly influence whether a child gets immunized.

What do parents in the County think?
Methodology
LACHS 2011 Child Survey

- Dual frame: landline & cell phone
- Adult survey follow-up & supplemental landline RDD
- 1 child was randomly selected for each randomly selected household.
- Interview the adult in the household who were most knowledgeable about the health and daily routines of the selected child
LACHS 2011 Child Survey

• Overall sample size: 6,013
  – This report is restricted to parents (including biological, foster, adoptive, and step) of children ages 0-17 years.
  – Sample size for current analysis: 5,372

• Language of interview
  – English, Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Korean

• Data weighting

• Response rate: RR3=0.202
Immunization questions

1) Do you think that it is safe for a child under one year of age to get immunized?

2) Do you think that it is normal or acceptable for a child to experience mild fever, swelling, or mild rash after getting a shot?

3) Do you think that parents should be allowed to send their children to school even if they are not immunized?
Results
Q1: Do you think that it is safe for a child under one year of age to get immunized?
Percent of Children (0-17 years old) Whose Parents Think It Is Safe/Unsafe for an Infant to Get Immunized

- Safe: 80.7%
- Not safe: 13.4%
- Do not know: 5.9%
Percent of Children (0-17 years old) Whose Parents Think It Is Safe for an Infant to Get Immunized, by Parent Gender

- Fathers: 70.5%
- Mothers: 84.5%
Percent of Children (0-17 years old) Whose Parents Think It Is Safe for an Infant to Get Immunized, by Parent Race/Ethnicity

- Latino: 80.5%
- White: 84.2%
- African American: 77.4%
- Asian: 78.2%
- NHOPIC: 86.9%

^Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander
Percent of Children (0-17 years old) Whose Parents Think It Is Safe for an Infant to Get Immunized, by Language Used Most at Home

- English: 81.8%
- Spanish: 80.6%
- Asian Languages: 73.9%
- Other European Languages‡: 63.5%
- Middle Eastern Languages: 79.3%

‡European languages other than English and Spanish.
Percent of Children (0-17 years old) Whose Parents Think It Is Safe for an Infant to Get Immunized, by Access to Care

Access Medical Care with Ease

- Yes: 82.4%
- No: 68.1%

Have Regular Source of Care

- Yes: 81.0%
- No: 74.6%
Q2. Do you think that it is normal or acceptable for a child to experience mild fever, swelling, or mild rash after getting a shot?
Percent of Children (0-17 years old) Whose Parents Think It Is Acceptable/Unacceptable for a Child to Experience Mild Side Effects after Getting a Shot

- **Acceptable**: 67.7%
- **Not acceptable**: 29.2%
- **Do not Know**: 3.1%
Percent of Children (0-17 years old) Whose Parents Think It Is Acceptable for a Child to Experience Mild Side Effects after Getting a Shot, by Parent Race/Ethnicity

- Latino: 59.1%
- White: 86.4%
- African American: 61.7%
- Asian: 78.8%
- NHOPI:* 60.9%

*Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander; *Unstable estimate
Percent of Children (0-17 years old) Whose Parents Think It Is Acceptable for a Child to Experience Mild Side Effects after Getting a Shot, by Education

- Less than high school: 47.4%
- High school: 68.2%
- Some college or trade school: 70.9%
- College or post graduate degree: 82.3%
Percent of Children (0-17 years old) Whose Parents Think It Is Acceptable for a Child to Experience Mild Side Effects after Getting a Shot, by Household Income

- 0-99% FPL: 54.9%
- 100-199% FPL: 64.0%
- 200-299% FPL: 69.6%
- 300% or above FPL: 82.8%
Percent of Children (0-17 years old) Whose Parents Think It Is Acceptable for a Child to Experience Mild Side Effects after Getting a Shot, by Service Planning Area

- Antelope Valley: 63.6%
- San Fernando: 71.6%
- San Gabriel: 75.6%
- Metro: 82.0%
- West: 55.4%
- South: 61.7%
- East: 65.3%

County of Los Angeles Public Health
Percent of Children (0-17 years old) Whose Parents Think It Is Acceptable for a Child to Experience Mild Side Effects after Getting a Shot, by Language Used Most at Home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Used Most at Home</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
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Percent of Children (0-17 years old) Whose Parents Think It Is Acceptable for a Child to Experience Mild Side Effects after Getting a Shot, by Access to Care

- **Access Medical Care with Ease**
  - Yes: 69.6%
  - No: 54.7%

- **Have Regular Source of Care**
  - Yes: 68.6%
  - No: 50.0%
Q3. Do you think that parents should be allowed to send their children to school even if they are not immunized?
Percent of Children (0-17 years old) Whose Parents Think Children Should/Should Not be Allowed to Attend School If They Are Not Immunized
Percent of Children (0-17 years old) Whose Parents Think Children Should be Allowed to Attend School Even If They Are Not Immunized, by Parent Race/Ethnicity

Data for Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders are suppressed.
Percent of Children (0-17 years old) Whose Parents Think Children Should be Allowed to Attend School Even If They Are Not Immunized, by Parent Education
Percent of Children (0-17 years old) Whose Parents Think Children Should be Allowed to Attend School Even If They Are Not Immunized, by Household Income

- 0-99% FPL: 17.5%
- 100-199% FPL: 19.9%
- 200-299% FPL: 23.8%
- 300% or above FPL: 25.2%

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
Public Health
Percent of Children (0-17 years old) Whose Parents Think Children Should be Allowed to Attend School Even If They Are Not Immunized, by Language Used Most at Home

- **Spanish**: 15.1%
- **English**: 25.4%

*Data are not stable for children whose parents mainly spoke Asian, other European, and Middle Eastern languages.*
Percent of Children (0-17 years old) Whose Parents Think Children Should be Allowed to Attend School Even If They Are Not Immunized, by Service Planning Area

- Antelope Valley: 22.3%
- San Fernando: 24.4%
- San Gabriel: 20.5%
- Metro: 20.9%
- West: 30.8%
- South: 15.4%
- East: 19.6%
- South Bay: 20.8%
Percent of Kindergarten Enrollees with Personal Belief Exemptions by SPA, 2014-15 School Year

Data Source: Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Immunization Program, 2014-2015 Immunization Status of Kindergarten Students, California (in schools with ten or more kindergarten students enrolled).
Is parental knowledge about vaccination associated with vaccine use?
Percent of Children (0-17 years old) Who Had Been Vaccinated for H1N1 Flu (at least 1 dose) Since October, 2009, by Parental Concerns about Vaccination

- Safe for Children <1 Year to Be Vaccinated:
  - Yes: 37.7%
  - No: 27.8%

- Acceptable to Experience Mild Reactions after Getting a Shot:
  - Yes: 39.7%
  - No: 29.5%
The LACHS data reveal **disparities in knowledge and attitudes** about childhood immunization across different populations of parents in the County. Parents’ **social, economic, and cultural backgrounds**, and their **access to medical care for their children**, impact their concerns and attitudes about routine childhood vaccination.
Recapture

• A lower percentage of parents who spoke mainly Asian languages and other European languages thought it was safe to vaccinate an infant.

• A lower percentage of parents who spoke Spanish believed it was acceptable for a child to experience mild side effects after immunization.

• English-speaking parents were more likely than Spanish-speaking parents to report that children should be allowed to attend school even if they are not immunized.
Recapture -2

• Parents who reported easier access to medical care for their children had less concern about vaccination safety and side effects.

• A higher percentage of white, highly-educated, and high-income parents understood that mild reactions to vaccination are normal in children.

• A higher percentage of white, highly-educated, and high-income parents also thought that children should be allowed to attend school without immunizations.
Limitations

• Self-reported data

• Does not represent persons living in group quarters

• Low response rate

• Limited sample sizes for some subgroups

• Weighting based on the distribution of children, not parents
Thank You