

Original Article

VACCINATION STATUS OF CHILDREN AGED 1-5 YEARS IN LABOUR COMMUNITY

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Objective: To determine the vaccination status of children aged 1-5 years.

Material and Methods: Mothers of children aged 1-5 years coming to pediatrics out patient department were interviewed according to pre designed questionnaire. The data then compiled was interpreted at the end of study.

Results: Results of our study showed 59% of children received full course of vaccination. 9% were not vaccinated at all. 32% of children received 1-3 doses of vaccination but did not complete the course.

Conclusion: Immunization coverage of children in Pakistan is still around 60%. Our effort needs to be intensified to reach the poor children living in far off areas.

Key Words: EPI, Vaccination status, Under 5

Introduction

All around the world every year some 12 million children die before they reach their fifth birthday, many of them during the first year of life. Seven in every 10 of these of deaths are due to diarrhea, pneumonia, measles, malaria and malnutrition-often a combination of these conditions.¹

Two thirds of these deaths take place in developing countries. A large share of this morbidity and mortality can be prevented by vaccination of children. A vaccine is an antigenic preparation used to produce active immunity against a specific disease.² Vaccines which protect against disease by inducing immunity are widely and routinely administered around the world, based on common sense principal that it is better to keep people from falling ill than to treat them, once they are ill. Vaccination is considered to be one of the most cost effective health intervention.³

When WHO initiated EPI in May 1974 less than 5% of the world children were immunized during the 1st. year of life against six killer diseases, DPT, T.B, Measles, Polio. However a quarter of world's children, about 25 million infants are not immunized against these killer diseases.⁴ EPI initially focused on building sustainable routine immunization system to protect children against common childhood diseases through administration of vaccines during infancy.⁵

Pakistan is one of the developing countries where infant mortality rate is quite high i.e. 65/1000 live births.⁶ Nearly 1 in 10 children does not survive his or her fifth birthday. Though a large no. of hospitals, medical centers, dispensaries as well as mobile teams are working to improve the vaccination status of

infants in Pakistan, there are still many obstacles and hurdles especially in reaching out children living in remote areas.

Illiteracy is another factor which keeps many children of uneducated parents from getting vaccination.

Material and Methods

This study was conducted in pediatrics out patient department of Social Security Hospital, Lahore. Children aged 1 to 5 years were included in the study. A questionnaire was designed and mothers of children aged 1-5 years were questioned regarding the age, sex and vaccination status of these children.

Results

Mothers of 600 children aged 1-5 years were questioned according to questionnaire. Results showed that out of 600 children 372 (62%) were males while 328 (38%) were females.

Table-1: Sex distribution of 600 patients.

Sex	Number	Percentage
Male	372	62%
Female	328	38%

Table-2: Vaccination status of children.

Vaccination status	Number	Percentage
Vaccinated	355	59%
Partially vaccinated	191	32%
Not Vaccinated	54	11%

Further analysis of the result showed that 59% of children were fully vaccinated, while 32% children received one or two doses of vaccination but did not follow up the full course afterwards. Thus 32% children were partially vaccinated and 9 % of children did not receive any dose of vaccination.

Discussion

Immunization is one of the most cost beneficial and cost effective disease prevention measures. As a result of effective and safe vaccine, small pox has been eradicated; polio is close to world wide eradication. Though developed countries like US claim to achieve 90-95% immunization coverage, situation in developing countries is not very encouraging.

Our result showed that almost 59% of children receive full course of vaccination.

Nosheen Iqbal, Shakila Azhar et al conducted a survey in slum area of Lahore in 1997, in which 46% children were fully vaccinated.⁷ Some authorities put the EPI coverage in Pakistan at 37% to 60%, another nationwide study showed the coverage to be just 35%⁸ while another survey conducted in 2006 showed the following results.⁹

Full Immunization.

Punjab	Sindh	NWFP	Balochistan
76%	59%	52%	32%

Global efforts to immunize children against life threatening diseases set a record high last year but failed to protect millions of youngsters in the world's poorest countries.¹⁰ In Pakistan also time and again measures are taken to reach out to the children living in remote areas. "Strengthening of EPI programme" was launched in 2003-04 to expand immunization coverage up to 80% by the year 2009.¹¹

But as various results show a lot of more work needs to be done to improve the present situation. We would make following recommendations.

Education about vaccination should begin during antenatal visits.

T.V channels, newspapers should be used effectively for creating awareness about vaccination and removing the myths associated with it.

A complete vaccination certificate can be made mandatory before admission to school.

More health care centers should be set up, especially in small cities. Mobile teams should be increased which can deliver vaccine, directly to individuals in towns.

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