According to the World Health Organization (WHO), vaccination has reduced the burden of infectious diseases to a significant extent. In recent times, however, the focus has been more on vaccine safety rather than effectiveness. As with any other public health program, immunizations and associated policies are designed to protect the health of the public. Compared to minor risks of side effects of vaccination, the risk of infection often rationalizes the use of vaccination. In states like Georgia, with fewer outbreaks associated with non-vaccination, the need to access community immunity remains constant. Though some articles have assessed parental refusal of childhood vaccination as an ethical concern, few have addressed the economic burden to society as a result of parental rights to refuse vaccination in the ethical contexts of rights, outbreak costs, and community safety.

Ethical issues of community safety and costs of the outbreak, as well as the rights of the child, should be considered in the debate of childhood vaccination. Research, policy, and parental education strategies should also take ethical implications into account to encourage well-informed policy and parental decision-making.

Full article.
Georgia Southern: Reports on Ethical Approaches to Mandating Influenza Vaccinations for Local Health Department Workforce in Georgia

December 16, 2019

The seasonal influenza illness occurs every year in the United States during the cooler months from October to April, sometimes lasting longer. Although certain populations are more susceptible to this condition, data have shown that otherwise healthy individuals have experienced alarming rates of morbidity and mortality associated with these infections. Despite the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)’s recommendation for influenza vaccination for all HCWs, compliance have been lagging among local health departments’ workforce. This practice arguably exposes a wide cross section of the U.S. population to the flu, while being served in these facilities. The utilitarian approach provides a framework to examine the ethical implications to the public of mandating influenza vaccination for these employees.

The following research questions were addressed: 1) Do local public health departments in Georgia mandate annual influenza vaccinations? 2) What are the ethical considerations for mandating influenza vaccinations for public health employees? and 3) What are the ethical considerations for mandating influenza vaccinations for the community? Twenty-five articles were included in the review.

In conclusion the utilitarian approach is sufficient for the influenza vaccination policy-making strategies and in the ethical approaches of mandating influenza vaccinations for local health department workforce in Georgia if need be, for vaccination targets are to be achieved.

Full article.

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