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Evidence-Based Practice Assignment

Combating Vaccine Hesitancy Through Nurse-Led Education in School Settings

Vaccine hesitancy among parents of school-aged children poses a significant obstacle to achieving optimal immunization coverage and protecting community health. Recent data suggests that nearly one-third of surveyed parents reported hesitancy about vaccinating children aged 12-15, with concerns centered primarily on vaccine safety and effectiveness (Ruiz and Bell, 2022). One study suggests, “Suspicion about vaccines due to false or misleading information found online...was a significant issue, particularly among marginalized populations” (Ballstadt, 2023). Additionally, experts include that “trust is essential if you are actually going to reduce hesitancy” and that “vaccine education needs to be ongoing and highly visible” (Beeson, 2023). Given the context, school-based nursing interventions have a pivotal role: In parents of school-aged children, does a nurse-led educational intervention addressing vaccine myths and safety, compared to standard school health communication, reduce vaccine hesitancy and increase vaccination rates?

Despite major progress in preventing vaccine-preventable disease, vaccine hesitancy remains a serious public-health concern in the school-aged population. The National Association of School Nurses states that “vaccination-rates about 95% provide community protection” and

that “school nurses are strongly positioned within their communities to educate students, families, and school staff about the critical role of vaccines in preventing disease” (National Association of School Nurses, 2025). Research also indicates that “promoting vaccine compliance can be challenging for school nurses, especially if a community holds strong beliefs regarding the necessity of pediatric vaccines” (Wilson, Mote, Morse, 2023). One review note acknowledges that intervention strategies which build trusting relationships and engage in compassionate dialogue “can facilitate effective education and promote vaccine compliance” (Wilson, Mote, Morse, 2023). In school settings where nurses are absent or under-resourced, immunization exemption rates tend to rise and opportunities for meaningful communication about vaccines are lost. Because schools provide daily access to children and their families, they are an ideal venue for nursing-led vaccine education. By focusing on helping parents understand vaccine safety, dispelling myths, and strengthening trust, school nurses can support improved immunization rates and reinforce herd immunity. Given these factors, examining the impact of a nurse-led educational intervention in a school setting is timely and highly significant for nursing practice, student health, and community well-being.

Research shows that parental vaccine hesitancy remains a growing concern and a barrier to public health progress. Studies indicate that misinformation, fear, and lack of trust in healthcare providers are primary causes. According to a systematic review, “face-to-face information or education may improve children’s vaccination status and parents’ knowledge or understanding of vaccination” (Kaufman et al., 2018). Nurse-led educational interventions are especially effective because nurses are viewed as trusted sources of information. A review found that nurses who engage parents through open dialogue help “combat misinformation and increase vaccine compliance” (Cassidy et al., 2021). Although research on school-based nurse

interventions is limited, evidence suggests that empowering nurses to educate parents can reduce hesitancy and strengthen community vaccination rates (National Association of School Nurses, 2025).

The proposed intervention focuses on implementing a nurse-led educational program for parents of school-aged children to address vaccine hesitancy. School nurses would host informational sessions that dispel myths, present vaccine safety data, and allow time for parent questions. This approach builds trust through direct engagement, as “personalized communication from healthcare providers remains one of the strongest predictors of vaccine acceptance” (CDC, 2023). The comparison group would receive only standard school communications such as flyers or emails. Outcomes would include pre- and post-intervention surveys measuring hesitancy and follow-up vaccination rates. By leading these interventions, school nurses can play a pivotal role in promoting vaccine confidence and improving immunization coverage.

This research highlights the vital role school nurses play in combating vaccine hesitancy and promoting public health. By leading educational interventions, nurses can build trust, address misinformation, and support informed decision-making among parents. According to the National Association of School Nurses, school nurses are “uniquely positioned to influence health behaviors and improve vaccination compliance.” Empowering nurses with training, time, and resources to engage families can lead to lasting improvements in vaccine confidence and community health. Ultimately, integrating nurse-led education into school programs represents a practical, evidence-based strategy for increasing vaccination rates and safeguarding children’s well-being.

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