

Vaccination coverage in children travelling with fairs in the Netherlands

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Introduction

In the National Vaccination Program (NVP) in the Netherlands (parents of) all children receive an invitation at their home address to get their vaccinations at the Public Health Service (PHS) in their home town. Children of occupational seasonal travellers may therefore miss or delay their vaccinations. In this study we assess vaccination coverage and timeliness in children travelling with fairs and we make an inventory of practical problems. The aim is to optimize the public health vaccination service for this group.

Methods

The study population consists of 281 0-12 years old pupils of The Travelling School, a foundation for education of children travelling with fairs. Their parents were invited to fill in a questionnaire. A subgroup of 12 parents was interviewed by mobile phone on possible problems organizing vaccination. With permission of the parents vaccination status was checked at the National Vaccination Register. Completion of vaccination is assessed according to the NVP for different age groups, timeliness is assessed according to the NVP instructions for the PHS. Ratios were calculated for fully vaccinated children and vaccinations given in time. Data were processed using SPSS software.

Results

Age	Required vaccinations	% fully vaccinated (n)
5-12 mo	upto DTPP 3	100 (3)
13-14 mo	Upto DTPP 4	100 (1)
15 mo – 4 yr	upto MMR1	95 (21)
5-9 yr	upto DT(P)P – 4 yr	95 (100)
> 9 yr	upto MMR 2 & DTP 9 yr	92 (25)



The response was 56%. Except 2 foreign born children all children have been taking part in the NVP. The ratio of fully vaccinated children was 94,7% (95% CI 91,2-98,2 %) comparable to the general Dutch population. Timeliness ranged from 75% for DPT vaccination on two months of age to 98% for DPT vaccination on 4 years. Most parents made special arrangements on vaccination of their children at the PHS in their hometown. During the Men C mass vaccination campaign in 2002 92% of the eligible children were vaccinated. In contrast to the general population the majority of them was vaccinated by family doctors.

Conclusions

People travelling with fairs are motivated to get their children vaccinated in time.

Vaccination status and timeliness of vaccinations are comparable to the general Dutch population.

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