

Module 1. Cultural Awareness - Topic 1. Self-Awareness

Christiana Kouta, Elena Rousou, Elena Nikolaidou, Panagiota Ellina, Paraskevi Charitou
Cyprus University of Technology

1. INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization defines *vaccine hesitancy* as the “delay in acceptance or refusal of vaccines despite availability of vaccination services” (MacDonald, 2015).

The healthcare professional is a key element to transmit information, resolve doubts and increase confidence in vaccines. They must be prepared to face this challenge. When situations occur in which unwanted events are rightly or wrongly connected with vaccination, they may erode confidence in vaccines and the authorities delivering them. Healthcare professionals must have the resources and easy access to health services, so they can provide the knowledge regards to vaccination.

This learning unit provides a quick overview of knowledge related to some of the relevant key terms and definitions regards to vaccination.

2. AIMS

The aim of this tool is to introduce you to the concept of Cultural Awareness and to enhance the self-awareness in regard to vaccination.

3. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this training, the participants will be able to:

- Gain knowledge related to some of the relevant key terms, definitions.
- Enhance self-awareness and vaccination.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1. Concepts and definitions

Cultural awareness. The degree of awareness we have about our own cultural background and cultural identity. This helps us to understand the importance of our cultural heritage and that of others and makes us appreciate the dangers of ethnocentricity (Papadopoulos, 2006).

Self-awareness. High self-awareness is claimed to lead to better decision making, is linked to team performance and authentic leadership (Carden, Jones & Passmore, 2022).

Vaccination. It is a simple, safe, and effective way of protecting against harmful diseases. It uses body's natural defences to build resistance to specific infections and makes immune system stronger (*Vaccines and immunization: What is vaccination?*, n.d.) .

Vaccines. They train immune system to create antibodies, just as it does when it's exposed to a disease. However, because vaccines contain only killed or weakened forms of germs like viruses or bacteria, they do not cause the disease or put you at risk of its complications (*Vaccines and immunization: What is vaccination?*, n.d.).

Vaccination Hesitancy. Refers to the reluctance or refusal to be vaccinated.

4.2. What the research says on the topic

- **Shen, S. (Cindy), & Dubey, V. (2019). Addressing vaccine hesitancy. *Canadian Family Physician*, 65(3), 175-181. Available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6515949/>**
Practical tips for addressing parental vaccine hesitancy in primary care include starting early, presenting vaccination as the default approach, building trust, being honest about side effects, providing reassurance on a robust vaccine safety system, focusing on protection of the child and community, telling stories, and addressing pain. Also provided are statements that providers could use in vaccination-related conversations; answers to commonly asked questions on benefits, safety, and immunologic aspects of vaccines; and links to a number of online resources for physicians and parents. Vaccine-hesitant parents who are on the fence far outnumber vaccine refusers; therefore, counselling this group might be more effective. Reasons behind vaccine hesitancy are complex and encompass more than just a knowledge deficit. As a trusted source of information on vaccines, family physicians play a key role in driving vaccine acceptance.
- **Bedford, H., Attwell, K., Danchin, M., Marshall, H., Corben, P., & Leask, J. (2018). Vaccine hesitancy, refusal and access barriers: The need for clarity in terminology. *Vaccine*, 36(44), 6556-6558. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.vaccine.2017.08.004>. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0264410X17310708>**
Although vaccination uptake is high in most countries, pockets of sub-optimal coverage remain posing a threat to individual and population immunity. Increasingly, the term ‘vaccine hesitancy’ is being used by experts and commentators to explain sub-optimal vaccination coverage. We contend that using this term to explain all partial or non-immunisation risks generating solutions that are a poor match for the problem in a particular community or population. We propose more precision in the term ‘vaccine hesitancy’ is needed particularly since much under-vaccination arises from factors related to access or pragmatics. Only with clear terminology can we begin to understand where the problem lies, measure it accurately and develop appropriate interventions. This will ensure that our interventions have the best chance of success to make vaccines available to those who want them and in helping those who are uncertain about their vaccination decision.

5. LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Activity 1 (duration: 10 minutes):

Read the following article and share your thoughts/opinions/experiences about the issues on this topic on the dedicated forum and give feedback to other participants.

Vaccine hesitancy: Definition, scope and determinants-
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0264410X15005009>

No.	Title and description of the resource	Type	Language of resource	Learning, training, assessment and evaluation activities	Access URL / download
1.	Vaccine hesitancy: Definition, scope and determinants	Article	English	Individual learning	https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0264410X15005009

6. ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Quiz (duration: 10 minutes):

Questions and answers

1. Cultural Awareness is the degree of awareness we have about other cultural backgrounds and cultural identities.
2. High self-awareness is claimed to lead to better decision making, is linked to team performance and to authentic leadership.
3. The Vaccines, train the immune system to create antibodies, just as it does when it's exposed to a disease.

7. REFERENCES

- Bedford, H., Attwell, K., Danchin, M., Marshall, H., Corben, P., & Leask, J. (2018). Vaccine hesitancy, refusal and access barriers: The need for clarity in terminology. *Vaccine*, 36(44), 6556-6558. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.vaccine.2017.08.004>
- Carden, J., Jones, R. J., & Passmore, J. (2022). Defining Self-Awareness in the Context of Adult Development: A Systematic Literature Review. *Journal of Management Education*, 46(1), 140-177. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1052562921990065>
- MacDonald, N. E. (2015). Vaccine hesitancy: Definition, scope and determinants. *Vaccine*, 33(34), 4161-4164. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.vaccine.2015.04.036>
- Papadopoulos, I. (2006). *Papadopoulos I (Ed) (2006): Transcultural Health and Social Care: Development of Culturally Competent Practitioners. Churchill Livingstone Elsevier. Edinburgh. ISBN 13: 978 0 443 10131 1. (351 pages).*
- Shen, S. (Cindy), & Dubey, V. (2019). Addressing vaccine hesitancy. *Canadian Family Physician*, 65(3), 175-181.
- Vaccines and immunization: What is vaccination?* (n.d.). World Health Organization (WHO). Retrieved 9 February 2023, from <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/vaccines-and-immunization-what-is-vaccination>