



UNIVERSITÀ
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Supporting parents to make quality decisions about childhood vaccination

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Aula Magna "Cesare Musatti" - Via Venezia 8 - Padova

The refusal of childhood vaccinations has perplexed governments worldwide. It can lead to disease outbreaks, illness and death. Recently, some governments have opted for more severe penalties for non-vaccination, such as childcare lockouts or removal of welfare payments. But these risk making the children of vaccine refusers pay for the decisions of their parents. There is an urgent need to find ways to address vaccine refusal that are both effective and ethically sustainable.

This seminar will focus on research in addressing vaccination refusal and hesitancy in the clinical encounter. Health professionals are influential in vaccination decisions of parents. Yet there is conflicting evidence on how best to address hesitancy in particular. With collaborators in the UK and Canada, our Australian team is developing a communication package designed to help health professionals address vaccine hesitancy in primary care. 'SARAH' (Support and Resources to Assist Hesitant parents with vaccination) is a complex intervention informed by communication science and extensive research with clinicians and parents. The package assists health professionals to identify whether parents are vaccination-accepting, hesitant or declining, adapting flexible goals and appropriate strategies. Specific resources are designed to support the process. For hesitant and declining parents, we are developing decision support and values clarification tools.

This research is attempting to navigate the tensions between the public health goals of full vaccination and parental satisfaction, with a broader goal of contributing to more sustainable trust in vaccination programs.



Julie Leask is an Associate Professor in the School of Public Health, University of Sydney. She is currently a Visiting Professor at University of Parma. She is also a visiting Senior Research Fellow at the National Centre for Immunisation Research & Surveillance (NCIRS).

Julie has a background in nursing and midwifery with a Master of Public Health (1998) and PhD (2003) from the University of Sydney on "Understanding Immunisation Controversies".

Julie's research interests include immunisation controversies, psychological and sociological aspects of infectious diseases, risk communication, environmental health and the mass media.

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