

Measles making a comeback: an increased need for vaccinations



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Measles Making a Comeback: An Increased Need for Vaccinations

Although there are some who tend to disagree, vaccinations are an essential part of human growth and development. In the United States in 1994, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) realized there was a problem with the continuing rise in healthcare costs for easily treatable illnesses that also resulted in unnecessary longer hospital stays and readmissions. The CDC began to perform research and understand more fully that Americans were not being informed enough about the importance of protecting themselves in order to decrease the spread of otherwise preventable diseases. They enlisted the help of community organizations and began to more heavily educate the public about the importance of receiving regular vaccinations. Before 1994, the approximate percentage of vaccinations for American was around 50%. These numbers were astounding in that around 50% of Americans were unaware that they were potentially spreading illnesses from lack of education and awareness of the potential community dangers. Since 1994, with more education and easier access to vaccinations, the percentage of Americans in general, not just children receiving immunizations, skyrocketed to 90% resulting in saving trillions of dollars in healthcare costs and millions of lives in recent years.

Overview of Case Study

A nonprofit medical clinic, Open Arms, while a well serving resource in the community, has lately undergone a localized problem. There has been an increase in cases of measles that have been reported in the community. One of the problems faced is that there is also a growing number of people and groups that are anti vaccination attempting to influence the rest of the

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community especially where children are concerned. The anti-vaccination groups were spreading the misconception that the government was responsible for the outbreak because it wanted to pressure immigrants to vaccinate their children. The spread of misinformation included long term effects such as autism. In a world where autism is becoming more prominent, parents are worried and for possibly good reason.

Because of the measles outbreak, more unvaccinated children are being exposed and facing a deadly game. Unfortunately, the parents of these children are being forced to believe the consequences are far deadlier than they anticipated. A disease such as measles, that is easily preventable because of vaccinations, should not have to be a concern. Even adults are experiencing the tragedy of the disease because they chose not to be inoculated. The ability to counter the misinformation, vaccinate and treat the affected parties, is a long-standing debate in most communities.

Analysis of Ethical Issues in the Case Study1

The problems lie in that there are arguments that the Government is interfering with people's decisions whether or not to vaccinate themselves and their children. In actuality, the Government is rightfully responsible for keeping their people safe and offering options for healthcare. With the ease and frequency of travel in today's world, if one person gets sick, it then has the opportunity to pass it on to multiple people creating a pyramid effect. This has potential to become an epidemic, where the disease spreads over a community. Historically there has been many diseases that have spread without vaccines to which no one had any control over (Cardemil, 2017).

There are many people out there that believe that vaccines can cause autism in children (Bayer, 2017). Bayer dispels the argument that it's no one's business whether or not people get vaccinated and counters with the fact that unvaccinated people potentially threaten the health of others and therefore leads to a foot in the door for otherwise preventable diseases to spread within a community. Autism is having been shown to be caused by a mixture of environmental and genetic traits. If vaccinations were linked to autism, there would be more people with diagnosed Autism. With ethics in mind, is there a line that crosses public safety and welfare and potential for government infringement over people's rights?

Using the Ethical Decision-Making Model to Analyze the Case Study.

The Ethical Decision-Making Model encompasses *moral awareness*, *moral judgment* and *ethical behavior*. Moral awareness in the beginning and should be the focus of a community should be taught with reinforced and frequent, easily accessible education to adults and even children. Becoming aware of the dangers and being able to make a well-educated decision leads the way to eradication of diseases. Moral judgement allows for a facilitator to create an environment of learning in order to better involve community members to make the best decision for them and their loved ones. Based on personal experiences, a person should be able to decide what is best for them. Ethical behavior is the responsibility of the educator to provide as much education and accessibility to resources as possible so that a good decision can be made. While the government may have right to keep their people safe, they may not always have personal beliefs to look out for.

Effectiveness of Communication Approaches in the Case Study

Creating an environment of education and understanding allows for a better outcome with the treatment of preventable diseases. In this case study, even though she was frustrated, Piper reached out to other members in the community to help her which in turn led to a greater positive response.

With the outbreaks of measles and the availability of education, more parents were bringing their children into the clinic for vaccinations.

By taking community action and utilizing outside resources, Piper was able to effectively increase the clinic's treatments reducing the risk of the measles outbreak. As healthcare providers, there are times when there is a lot of frustration and failure may look like the only option when trying to get an entire community, or even an individual person to change. Getting community involvement can sometimes be the hardest yet most effective way of reaching people to bring about the most change. Being an effective communicator is what helps bring change.

Resolving the Ethical Dilemma by Applying Ethical Principles

There are four ethical principles of healthcare: autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and justice. These principles are often used to resolve ethical dilemmas related to health care whether healthcare professionals realize it or not. Autonomy is the accepting and understanding of a person's values. Beneficence is acting for the welfare of patients. Nonmaleficence is doing no harm to the patient. Justice refers to treating people fairly without any bias. One proposed solution would be to offer vaccinations and

education for free at popular locations: pharmacies, community clinics,
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churches and other public places with mobile clinics. Encouraging people to be educated is the first step in achieving maximum complacency.

Conclusion

References

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