

Week 1: Discussion Board

In 2019, the World Health Organization identified ten threats to global health. Among them were high-threat pathogens, a global influenza pandemic, and vaccine hesitancy. This list presaged the COVID-19 outbreak, which spotlighted vaccinations to curb the devastating effects of the virus. Yet, despite the availability of vaccines, outbreaks of deadly vaccine-preventable diseases like measles and diphtheria are rising in the U.S. and around the globe due to the hesitancy or refusal of individuals to vaccinate. An advisory group to WHO (2019) identified complacency, an inconvenience in obtaining vaccines, and a lack of confidence as reasons individuals choose not to vaccinate. Reflect on this global health concern and address the following:

1. Federal law requires that vaccine information statements (VIS) are distributed to the parent or person qualified under state law to consent to the vaccination of a minor. Should adolescent minors be allowed to consent to vaccines if their parent or guardian objects? Please explain your rationale.

I believe that minor patients should be allowed to consent to their own vaccinations if their parent objects once they reach a certain age mandated by their state. This is something that can have long term health effects on the patient if their parent does not vaccinate as recommended for adolescents. It has been shown to make the adolescent feel disempowered in their decision making as well. The issue that arises is that this can put a strain on family relationships, which may lead the adolescent to have hesitation in going against their parent to receive the vaccination (Yang et al., 2019).

2. At what age should this right be granted if minors are approved to consent to vaccination? Please explain your rationale.

I believe that a minor should be able to give consent to age- appropriate vaccinations starting at the age of 14. Studies have shown that most providers feel that they would be comfortable with patients at the minimum age of 14 to provide their own consent (Silverman et al., 2019).

3. What are the responsibilities, if any, of individuals who delay or reject vaccines for highly contagious diseases?