Parent/Guardian Survey Tool to Assess Understanding of Vaccination

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BACKGROUND
There has been increased skepticism of vaccination in the population in recent years. Factors such as fear, misinformation, and personal beliefs impact parents’ decision to forgo vaccination or follow a schedule that is different than the one suggested by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and Center for Disease Control (CDC).

There has been a slow, but steady rise in the number of parents that make vaccination decisions based on misinformation and/or beliefs, even though only a minority of the population has chosen to deviate from AAP and/or CDC recommendations. This has resulted in a resurgence of concerns about the return of serious preventable diseases in a time where health care providers and policy makers are emphasizing preventive medicine due to outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases.

OBJECTIVE
We developed a survey tool to assess the knowledge and beliefs of the parent and/or guardians of pediatric patients of All Children’s General Pediatrics Clinic. This has the potential to better educate parents/guardians about the benefits and safety of childhood vaccinations.

Physicians can start to address specific knowledge gaps and be better equipped to have meaningful conversations with patients regarding their decisions to vaccinate their children. However, it is important that physicians understand parents/guardians vaccine hesitancy.

METHODS
1. Receipt staff in General Pediatrics distributed the survey tool to parents/guardians of pediatric patients receiving medical services in an out-patient clinic.
2. Patients less than 3 years old without parents were excluded from the survey.
3. Patients were included in the survey if they were at least 18 years old and were capable of answering the survey questions.
4. Patients were eligible if they were willing to complete the survey.
5. Patients were enrolled in the study if they consented to participate.

SURVEY TOOL DESIGN
Our survey tool was designed to work in conjunction with the physician education-communication tool developed by April Pearson and Derek Djavaherian in 2013 (SELECT MD Class of 2016). This tool provides evidence-based statements that physicians can communicate to their patients about vaccination. In order to implement this tool, it is important for physicians to understand what parents/guardians understand about vaccinations. Our survey tool assesses responders’ knowledge, safety, trust, financial awareness, and values with respect to vaccinations.

RESULTS
Parents/Guardians are most concerned about the impact of vaccines on their child’s growth and development (n=77%).

CONCLUSIONS
1. Short survey tools can help physicians ask specific questions to best help their patients.
2. Responders trust their physicians to help them make decisions and advocate for their best interest based on AAP guidelines and recommendations (Part 1, statement 6).
3. Responders demonstrated overall confidence in their knowledge about vaccines to make decisions for their family’s vaccinations (Part 1, statement 7).
4. Responders were concerned with the impact of vaccines on children’s growth and development and possible cause of disabilities, and safety (Part 1, question 2).
5. Physicians can address the following specific knowledge gaps about vaccines parents/guardians.
6. A minority of responders use religious and/or philosophical beliefs to guide their health care decisions (Part 1, statement 1).

FUTURE DIRECTIONS
1. Improve the survey tool to more clearly elicit knowledge gaps and understanding of vaccinations.
2. Help physicians integrate education-communication tool developed by Derek Djavaherian and April Pearson (SELECT MD Class of 2016) in 2013 with education assessment tool.
3. Develop and/or distribute educational resources for patients to help address specific knowledge gaps. Resources include pamphlets, elevator statements, informational videos, and list of credible internet resources.

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PART 1
Where did you hear or learn about vaccines?

What is something you wish you knew more about with regards to vaccines?

PART 2
What is something you wish you knew more about with regards to vaccines?

What is your biggest concern about vaccines (if any)?

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