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Knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) of primary care healthcare providers towards childhood pneumococcal vaccination in Singapore

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Background and Aim: Pneumococcal vaccine was included in Singapore National Childhood Immunisation Schedule in 2009.

Prior to the official introduction of the vaccine, the vaccine coverage was an estimate of 20% of all newborns .

The aim of this survey was to study the Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of healthcare providers (doctors and nurses) in Singapore primary care sector towards childhood pneumococcal vaccination.

Methods: 57 doctors and 11 nurses participated in this study. It was a self administered questionnaire. for each question, it was assessed on a likert scale of 1 to 4, 1 being strongly agree, 2 somewhat agree, 3 somewhat disagree and 4 strongly disagree. The doctors were analysed in two categories. Family physicians' (FP) category included doctors with post graduate diploma or degree in Family Medicine and Medical officers' (MO)category which included doctors with only Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery. All 11 nurses had basic degree in nursing and were involved in developmental surveillance and childhood immunization.

Results: 100% nurses strongly agreed that pneumococcal vaccine is safe, while only 79% FP and 75% MO strongly agreed. 81% nurses, 64% FP and 75% MO strongly agreed that pneumococcal vaccine is effective. 100% nurses, 64% FP and 75% MO felt strongly agreed that it is important to immunize the child against pneumococcal disease. 90% nurses, 50% FP and 26% MO strongly agreed that they understood how the pneumococcal vaccine work. None of the nurses, 7% of the FP and 7% of the MO strongly agreed that they were concerned of the potential side effects from pneumococcal vaccine.

Conclusion: The family physician and the immunization nurse play a central role in the uptake of immunization programmes . Thus, it is important to educate all healthcare providers on how this vaccine work and its respective side effects.