

Understanding Parental vaccine hesitancy – What can the nurse researcher accomplish?
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Abstract

Background and Context. Vaccine hesitancy refers to the postponement in accepting or declining vaccination despite availability of vaccination services¹. In Canada, 2% of all children 2 years of age remain under vaccinated against vaccine preventable diseases and only 6% of children 0-4 have received their primary series of the COVID-19 vaccine, leaving 1.7 million children vulnerable². Arguably, vaccine hesitancy is more ubiquitous than once thought. A preliminary search of the literature suggests that safety, vaccine efficacy³ and trust in public health officials⁴ impacts vaccine hesitancy, however we don't know the reasons "why" parents hesitate. There is also a lack of description of vaccine hesitant parent stories within family units where some of their children have been vaccinated and others remain under vaccinated intentionally. Further, there is little research concerning nursing's role in this phenomenon and what this population would want from us. Contextualizing parental vaccine hesitancy requires understanding that the parents' behaviour is also influenced by nurses as one of the most trusted healthcare professionals. How does our positionality and our codes of ethics factor into our role and responsibilities especially in terms of the ethical principles of autonomy, beneficence, justice and non-maleficence⁵.

Objective: The goal of my presentation is to introduce my doctoral area of inquiry and engage conference participants in a discussion about how doctoral nursing research can enable better understanding of parental vaccine hesitancy by exploring the following:

- i. What theoretical lens/approach would be most knowledge generative and appropriate?
- ii. What methodological structure would generate new knowledges and practices?
- iii. What potential dangers await the nurse wanting to engage in vaccine hesitancy research?
- iv. What considerations should the nurse give to working with vulnerable populations?

¹ SAGE Working Group on Vaccine Hesitancy (2015); MacDonald, N. E. (2015). Vaccine hesitancy: Definition, scope and determinants, *Vaccine*, 33(34), 4161-4164.

² Health Canada - Public Health Agency. (2022). *Government of Canada. Vaccines for children: Covid-19*. Canada.ca. Retrieved October 22, 2022, from https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/vaccination-children/covid-19.html?utm_campaign=hc-sc-covidvaccine-22-23&utm_medium=sem&utm_source=bing&utm_content=ad-text-en&utm_term=covid+19+vaccines+for+children&adv=2223-249950&id_campaign=396742155&id_source=1256742395035133&id_content=78546549749570&gclid=bb2f8a206f8b178d0a9be974ec2e4347&gclsrc=3p.ds&; Canada, Public Health Agency. (2017). *Government of Canada*. Canada.ca. Highlights from the 2017 childhood National Immunization Coverage Survey (cNICS). Retrieved October 13, 2022, from <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/vaccine-hesitancy-canadian-parents.html#strengths>

³ Wang, E., Baras, Y., & Buttenheim, A. M. (2015). "Everybody just wants to do what's best for their child": Understanding how pro-vaccine parents can support a culture of vaccine hesitancy. *Vaccine*, 33(48), 6703-6709.

; Wiley, K.E., Leask, J., Attwell, K., Helps, C., Barclay, L., Ward, P.R., & Carter, S.M. (2021). Stigmatized for standing up for my child: A qualitative study of non-vaccinating parents in Australia. *SSM - Population Health*; Giambi, Cristina et al. (2018). "Parental Vaccine Hesitancy in Italy – Results from a National Survey." *Vaccine* 36.6: 779-787.; Haroune, Valerie, and Liz King. (2020). "Factors Contributing to Parental 'Vaccine Hesitancy' for Childhood Immunisations." *Nursing children and young people* 32.4, 20-25.; Aw J, Seng JJB, Seah SSY, Low LL. (2021) COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy-A Scoping Review of Literature in High-Income Countries. *Vaccines* (Basel), Aug 13;9(8):900.; Dubé E, Gagnon D, Zhou Z, Deceuninck G. (2016). Parental Vaccine Hesitancy in Quebec (Canada). *PLoS Curr*. Mar 7;8.

⁴ Rosenberg, M. (2016). Vaccine safety still concerns some parents. University of Guelph News. <https://news.uoguelph.ca/2014/03/vaccine-safety-still-concerns-some-parents/>

⁵ Beauchamp & Childress in Holm, S. (2001). Principles of Biomedical Ethics, 5th Ed. *Journal of Medical Ethics*, 2002;28, 332.