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Mandatory Vaccinations

Mandatory vaccination is the concept of enforcing fundamental vaccinations upon all eligible individuals within a specific jurisdiction (Byington 377). Vaccination may be termed as one of the most fundamental discoveries in the contemporary history of healthcare. In the earlier times, disease outbreaks, epidemics and complex germs that defied known treatment regimens would ravage populaces at will (Byington 377). The choice between life and death was mainly left to chance. With there being no capacity to cure, the next recourse was prevention, which was finally achieved through the innovative process of vaccination. With the safety of all people in mind, vaccines for children should be mandatory.

The basic concept behind vaccination is moving healthcare from being reactive to anticipatory. Instead of seeking to cure an infection, vaccination entails preparing the body to anticipate the infection. In case the body is ever exposed to that infection, its internal mechanisms are already enabled to repel the attack. Fortunately, modern medical science has developed the capacity to cure most of the infections that formed the basis for vaccination requirements. Further, many diseases such as HIV and AIDS as well as different forms of cancer have arisen, and there are no vaccines to prevent them (Byington 377). Finally, there are many religious and philosophical objections to vaccines, whose followership keeps growing. The totality of these three premises has made mandatory vaccinations a matter of great debate in the USA.

The advent of vaccination in the USA has resulted in great success in combating some diseases, which at some point seemed to have world-ending capabilities. Some variants of the flue as well as infections such as small pox and yellow fever did not assure remedies erstwhile. These diseases ravaged the American populace in doves leading to an actual impact in infant mortality and life expectancy. However, from a statistical perspective, the advent of vaccinations completely transformed the infant mortality and life expectancy levels. Vaccines are one of the most successful public health achievements as shown by the following statistical quotation from Byington “Vaccines: Can Transparency Increase Confidence and Reduce Hesitancy?”: “Between 1900 and 2000 the average life expectancy in the United States increased by .30 years from 43.7 to 76.8 years, and infant mortality through 12 months of age decreased from 100 per 1,000 population to 7 per 1,000 population” (377). Whereas other factors were present, vaccination played a critical role in the improvements of the general state of healthcare in the USA.

Still, there has been exponential improvement of drug based treatment regimens as indicated above, which has ensured that most ailments that could only be controlled through vaccination can now be cured as and when they occur. One of the most critical areas of vaccination is among children below the age of 10. These children are legally and practically under the care of their parents. When vaccination was a matter of life and death, there was a slight opposition to the same either from a scientific, religious, or philosophical perspective (LaVail and Kennedy 544).

However, with the vaccination becoming one of the many available options, questions about its safety, validity, and efficacy have arisen continuously. Currently parents want to have an informed decision about vaccination in sharp contrast to the past (LaVail and Kennedy 544). They need to understand if it is safe for their children and if it exponentially reduces the propensity for disease contraction. Such questions as “if the child is not vaccinated, what are the chances for contracting a disease?” have become common. More importantly, there are absolute objections premised on the constitutionally guaranteed fundamental right to freedom of worship.

Over and above these are the aforesaid philosophical objections that involve another fundamental right for freedom of conscience. An initial innovative means of ensuring mandatory vaccination regiments are adhered to making it mandatory for all children being admitted to school. This was meant to ensure that the concept had immunity among the children. However, by virtue of the legal loopholes created by philosophical and religious objections to vaccinations, the mandatory rules have been reduced to suggestions. Any parent who comes up with a plausible objection will almost always have unvaccinated child admitted to school (LaVail and Kennedy 544).

There is, therefore, no specific way of compelling parents to have their children vaccinated. Yet, vaccination is still fundamental for the overall health of all children; more so, in a setting where the children intermingle, such as school or play-parks. It leaves the only solution to the current impasse being to increase the level of parent’s confidence in vaccine through value addiction. “Confidence in the value of vaccines is an area of increasing attention because the salience of many VPDs has decreased”(LaVail and Kennedy 545). This can be done through active steps to enlighten parents on the efficacy, safety and necessity of vaccine in contemporary healthcare. When the parents are convinced that vaccination is fundamental to the health of their children, it will no longer be necessary to seek means of compulsion. This is because the parents will be active participants in the process of vaccination (LaVail and Kennedy 551).

The upshot of the foregoing is that vaccines are primary to healthcare, and have revolutionized the general health of the American populace recently. However, the advent of vaccination was introduced by situations where medical solutions for many aliments were inexistent. This situation has changed later, thus relegating vaccination to an option rather than a primary measure. Further, the concept of fundamental rights of freedom of worship and conscience has created a loophole for the negation of the concept of mandatory vaccination. Therefore, the only remaining option is to make vaccination more acceptable for the parents, so that compulsion becomes no longer necessary.

Works Cited

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