

Online information most cost-effective means of increasing MMR uptake, research finds

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Giving parents access to a website containing information about the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine is the most cost-effective way of increasing its uptake, new University of Leeds research has found.

Informing parents about the [vaccine](#) via a website containing information helping parents make a decision about MMR is on average £9.20 cheaper per vaccination to the NHS than informing them solely via a GP consultation, and £7.17 cheaper than via a leaflet providing information about the vaccine. In each case, the figure comprises the cost to the patient of, for example, travelling to a GP's surgery or private clinic, buying magazines or parenting books containing information on MMR, as well as the cost of additional GP or nurse contact time.

Now the experts are recommending that a similar website be developed as part of NHS guidelines on the MMR vaccine.

Dr Sandy Tubeuf, a health economist in the School of Medicine at the University of Leeds, was part of the research team. She said: "This research offers a really simple solution that would make a real difference to vaccination uptake and to the NHS budget. This research has shown considerable cost effectiveness to the NHS, and is much more convenient for parents who need more information about the safety of the MMR vaccine for their children.

"This information should be made available at the click of a mouse or

the swipe of a finger, as we have shown that it also helps to improve vaccine uptake."

In the study, funded by the National Institute for Health Research, 179 first-time parents whose children were offered the vaccine for the first time were split into three groups: those who had a visit to their GP plus logon details to the website by post, those who had a visit to the GP plus an information leaflet, or those who just had a GP appointment. They were recruited from GP surgeries across the north of England.

Parents were contacted when they were recruited for the study and sent a questionnaire. A second questionnaire was sent two weeks after the first, to enable the researchers to collect data for the economic evaluation.

The research, which will be published in the *British Journal of General Practice*, is the first to look at the economics of providing information about the MMR vaccine. Previous studies have shown that web-based information has a positive effect on vaccine uptake.

Provided by University of Leeds

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