

Getting to the point of parents' fears

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UQ researchers are studying attitudes around vaccines.

University of Queensland researchers are hoping to get to the pointy end of parents' fears about childhood vaccinations by conducting an Australia-wide survey.

A team from UQ's Parenting and Family Support Centre is asking parents to participate in the survey of attitudes towards vaccination in the first nation-wide research into the issue for almost two decades.

Lead researcher Dr Cassandra Dittman said little was known about the attitudes of the majority of the current generation of Australian parents.

"If we know how parents form their opinions, we can start to look at ways to have respectful and open discussions with them about [vaccine safety](#) and effectiveness, if that is what is required," Dr Dittman said.

She said many parents were probably not vehemently opposed or strongly in favour of vaccines but would fit under the category of being "vaccine hesitant".

"These are parents who might express hesitancy by delaying vaccines, refusing some vaccines but accepting others, or by vaccinating their child but still feeling concerned or uncertain about the fact that they had done so," she said.

"As a researcher, I know and understand that vaccines work and are safe.

"But as a parent of a toddler, when I come across the latest emotive story about the risks or side-effects of [vaccinations](#), my natural inclination, like any parent, is to worry about 'what if this happened to my child'?

"It's these kinds of attitudes that we want to properly investigate."

Dr Dittman said the survey sought to uncover what parents thought about vaccines and their effectiveness and safety, the sources of information they consult and trust when making decisions and how these factors relate to vaccine uptake.

Potentially, the [survey](#) could provide information to give [health care professionals](#) tools to help [parents](#) in their decision-making.

More information: Parents of children aged five years and under can participate in the survey here: exp.psy.uq.edu.au/vax/

Provided by University of Queensland

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