

European vaccination survey shows wide variety of parents' opinions across UK, Italy, France, Spain and Germany

April 21 2020

A survey of five European countries shows that parents in Spain are the most pro-vaccination (94%) while those in France (73%) are the least in favour of vaccination. One in 30 sets of parents in the UK and Germany are against all vaccinations, no matter which disease they are for. The survey results are part of a study due to be presented at the European Congress of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ECCMID), by Professor Jean Paul Stahl, University Hospital Grenoble, France, and colleagues.

Suboptimal vaccination coverage rates have led to vaccine-preventable disease resurgence and epidemics in Europe, such as measles, in recent years. Growing [vaccine](#) hesitancy is one of the key reasons for this situation. In this study, the authors aimed to compare opinions on vaccination of parents, the key target audience for vaccination, in five large European countries.

Vaccinoscopia Europe is a web-based survey conducted in 2019 on a representative sample of 1,500 parents of children aged 0 to 35 months in France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK: 300 per country—150 sets of parents (mother and father) of children in each country—with each set of parents submitting one set of opinions. The proportion of parents with positive opinions of vaccination varied according to countries (from 73% for France to 94% for Spain; other countries fell in between: 88% for Germany; 87% for Italy; 86% for the UK).

The UK and Germany had 3% of parents (1 in 30) opposed to all vaccinations versus less than 1% in the other countries. In all countries, more than 90% of parents were favourable to mandatory vaccination for at least certain vaccines (defined as being In favour of mandatory vaccination for at least 1 of the following diseases : tetanus; whooping cough; measles; rubella; pneumococcal meningitis; meningococcal meningitis B; meningococcal meningitis C; Haemophilus influenzae type b; poliomyelitis; diphtheria; mumps; hepatitis B; rotavirus gastroenteritis; chicken pox). Germany and the UK had the highest proportion of parents against compulsory vaccination: 7.8% for Germany; 7.4% for the UK; 4% for France; 1% for Italy and 0.8% for Spain.

In terms of vaccination knowledge, French parents felt significantly less well informed (77% well informed) than parents from the other countries (90-94% feeling well informed), and had read less online information about vaccination: 58% for France versus 70% for Germany; 81% for the UK; 71% for Italy; 58% for France; 70% for Spain.

The level of trust in [health authorities](#) was highest in Spain and lowest in France: 88% of Spanish parents rated their level of trust from 7 to 10 on a 10-point scale, while only 68% of French parents did so. For the UK and Germany this figure was 79%, and for Italy 74%.

Although the first source of information for [parents](#) in making the decision to vaccinate their child was a health care vaccinator, this differed in each country based on health care system. The second source of information was the internet, with health authorities' websites the most consulted by all countries, followed by friends and families. Influence of these last two sources varied according to countries (from 14 to 40% and from 9% to 30% respectively).

The authors conclude "Parents having a favourable opinion on

vaccination seemed to be linked with a better perceived vaccination knowledge. The health care provider doing the vaccination was the first source of information, while the internet was also a valuable resource while friends and families can also be influential. Local characteristics should be taken into account to increase confidence into vaccination. Evaluation should be harmonised at a European level, allowing countries to share best practice strategies for public health."

Provided by European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases

Citation: European vaccination survey shows wide variety of parents' opinions across UK, Italy, France, Spain and Germany (2020, April 21) retrieved 12 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-04-european-vaccination-survey-wide-variety.html>

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