Debates about vaccine mandates

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Politicians on mandatory vaccination

Matt Hancock, UK Health Secretary
“I’m looking very seriously at it” “… not ruling out”
"no decisions have been taken"

Scott Morrison, Australian PM
“I would expect it to be as mandatory as you can possibly make”
“We can’t hold someone down and make them take it”

Joao Doria, Sao Paulo Governor
“In Sao Paulo it will be mandatory, except for those with a medical note and a certificate stating that they cannot”

Dmitry Medvedev, Russia’s ex-PM
“Vaccination itself presupposes a person’s consent. … But sometimes these decisions can be binding in the public interest and the interest of protecting the vast majority of the population,”
Early compulsory vaccination

- Historical examples show simple compulsion produces an organised mass resistance movement

E.g. ‘Anti-vaccination Leagues’ in England and the Netherlands
The vaccinating majority

Still affected by the **three Cs:** Complacency, Convenience, Confidence


- High quality immunisation services and clear policy
- Persuasion and education

Images: Wikicommons
Balancing the spectrum

• Design policies that:
  • take into account two different groups in the vaccinating public (passive compliers and active resistors)
  • in an appropriate institutional setting (health systems, schools)
• Balance incentives, penalties, rights:
  • encourage passive compliers, but not so strict to overly penalise and provoke active resistors

Vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks

Measles outbreaks led to recent policy change:

• USA
• Italy
• France
• Samoa
• Germany
So mandatory vaccination works?

- Hard to separate from impact of other policies
- Ways around: home schooling, exemptions

Does not address underlying causes of vaccine hesitancy and refusal

- Provoke backlash
- Other consequences - inequity
- Countries where policies are not in place with high uptake (e.g. Sweden)

Pingali SC, et al. (2019). Associations of Statewide Legislative and Administrative Interventions With Vaccination Status Among Kindergartners in California. *JAMA*

Share of children vaccinated with the second dose of measles vaccine (MCV2), 2019 Source: WHO/UNICEF
Degrees of mandatoryness

Conditional mandatory vaccination (vaccine passports)
  • Travel, occupations, hospitals, care homes, schools, daycare, universities, public places, large events, public health emergency

Other policies
  • increase the 3 Cs and involve public

COVID vaccines will be mandatory for passengers, Qantas boss says

Qantas CEO Alan Joyce says the airline wants to make COVID vaccines mandatory for international travellers on its flights. Photo: Getty

Schools

Students protest mandatory Covid vaccinations at colleges

Italy makes COVID-19 vaccine mandatory for all health workers

COVID-19 vaccinations will be mandatory for Pennsylvania health system

Greek Fire Service rescuers get mandatory vaccination order
Legal and policy positions

• ECHR ruling on mandatory vaccination for children: ‘necessary in democratic society’

WHO:

• Interim position paper: considerations regarding proof of COVID-19 vaccination for international travellers (5 Feb 21)

• COVID-19 and mandatory vaccination: Ethical considerations and caveats (13 Apr 21)