

Addressing vaccine hesitancy: Public Health perspective

Saidatul Norbaya

Family Health Division, Ministry of Health, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Summary: Vaccination is the most effective public health intervention against vaccine preventable diseases. Success of vaccination lead to elimination of smallpox, polio in many parts of the world and efforts towards measles elimination is in progress. Today due to high childhood vaccination coverage, morbidity and mortality from various vaccine preventable diseases is rare and this leads to misinterpretation on importance of vaccination. Vaccine hesitancy refers to delay in acceptance or refusal of vaccination despite availability of vaccination services. Hesitancy ranges from outright refusals to vaccinate, delaying vaccination, agreeing with vaccination, and remaining uncertain about their effectiveness or safety or selective attitude toward certain vaccines. High vaccine hesitancy leads to low vaccination coverage in a community and could lead to disease outbreak leading to mortality from vaccine preventable disease. Various factors contribute to vaccine hesitancy in Malaysia. Population attitudes towards COVID-19 vaccination will be use to illustrate changes in behavior across pandemic time frame and efforts taken to address the situation.