Parents’ refusal to vaccinate their children: An increasing social phenomenon which threatens public health

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Over the last few years, many controversies related to immunization safety have arisen, leading to an increasing number of parents who refuse to vaccinate their children. We performed a qualitative research study to investigate the reasons behind child immunization safety concerns. Our results reflected a decrease in vaccination coverage, a tendency also observed in the statistics reports of the Romanian National Centre for Infectious Disease Control and Prevention. As in many other countries, in Romania, the anti-vaccination movement had a negative impact on parents' immunization behaviour. Nowadays, parents with young children do not have personal experience with vaccine-preventable diseases and they perceive low potential health risks from getting these infectious diseases. Disagreement among the medical experts is a frustrating concern for many parents, because even if they know that vaccination is supported by most of the medical community, they also recognize the expertise of researchers (immunologists, virologists, or microbiologists) who suggest a risk of severe long-term adverse events following immunization. The numerous controversies and statements surrounding immunization side effects caused an erosion of public trust in the efficiency and safety of vaccination programs. Therefore, the researchers along with the government must evaluate claims against vaccines and create new health policies presenting unambiguous information regarding the safety and importance of vaccination. Whether vaccination is voluntary or compulsory, each option faces complex ethical challenges because humans depend on each other in infectious diseases matter.

Biography
Carmen Liliana Barbacariu, MD, PhD is a Teaching Assistant at Grigore T. Popa University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Iasi, Romania. She is specialized in general practice and pediatrics and holds a PhD reflecting extensive research regarding childhood developmental disorders. Her main research interest is promoting child health and development through a range of early intervention strategies that address families with young children. She is a founding member of AREPMF (Romanian Association for Pediatric Education amongst General Practitioners) willing to give perfect primary care for children at a national level. She has over 50 scientific publications and co-authorships in scientific articles, textbooks, and monographs.

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