



European Social Marketing Conference, Lisbon, 27-28 November 2012

Can social marketing be used as a tool for risk communication in the context of measles elimination in Europe

ECDC session: Health communication in prevention and control of communicable diseases in Europe

Piotr Wysocki, ECDC Seconded National Expert

The importance of risk communication in the context of measles elimination

Since 2009 we observe intense debate on safety and effectiveness of vaccination which intensified during outbreak of the H1N1 influenza pandemic and continues together with ongoing epidemic of measles in Europe!

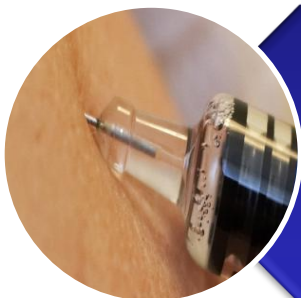


Challenge for risk communication-reaching vaccination goals

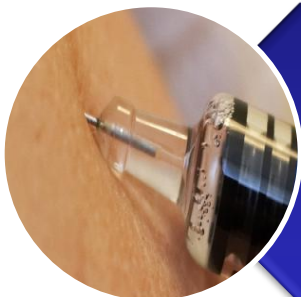
- Lack of information;
- hesitant population;
- uninformed perceptions regarding the benefit-risk ratio of MMR vaccination;
- media hype;
- professional healthcare advice: issues of trust and credibility;
- commercially motivated information;
- vaccine scepticism:
 - active opponents
 - religious objections
 - Anthroposophic community
 - Orthodox protestant groups
 - Roma population

BUT: Elimination of measles requires sustained vaccination coverage above 95% in all population groups with two doses of the MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) vaccine!

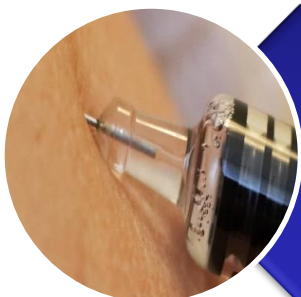
What is expected from risk communication in the context of measles elimination in Europe



Need to provide clear information and concise recommendations about vaccination programmes (why, when, and how to vaccinate)

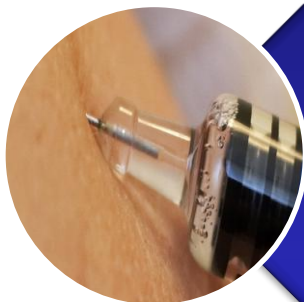


Need to inform parents who make a conscious decision to delay MMR vaccination so as to avoid immunising their children when they are very young

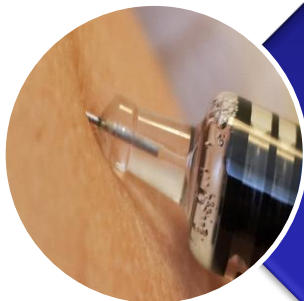


Need to minimise concerns about side effects and the safety of vaccines, along with perceptions of the low importance of MMR vaccination, that are among the commonly quoted reasons for not vaccinating children

What is expected from risk communication in the context of measles elimination (cont)



Need to clarify misconceptions and myths about vaccines e.g. alleged link between MMR vaccine and autism



Need to provide evidence and minimise knowledge gaps among healthcare professionals regarding MMR vaccination



Need to reach target audience through constant dialogue and gathering information on needs and type of information (e.g. medical, religious, peer group information), decisions on vaccination, appropriate means of dissemination, trusted sources, channels

Goals and priorities of communication programme for MMR vaccination

Communication programme goals

- Contribute to increased and sustained immunisation coverage. Countries will reach at least 95% national vaccination coverage with two doses of MMR.
- Contribute to the elimination of measles and rubella.
- Provide high-quality information on the benefits and risks of immunisation.

Communication objectives and possible priorities

- Increase the general understanding of the risks linked to measles, mumps and/or rubella.
- Increase levels of reassurance among people who are pro-vaccination so as to ensure that those who currently immunise their children continue to do so.
- Change misperceptions regarding the necessity of MMR vaccination, including the elimination of uninformed perceptions about the benefit/risk ratio of the vaccine.

Literature Reviews

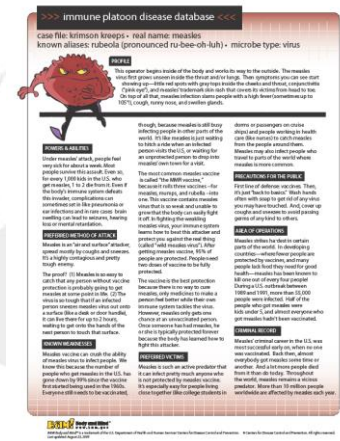
Effective risk communication for the prevention and control of communicable diseases in Europe



* The review (1) of more than 60 documents representing research undertaken mainly in Europe, Southeast Asia and North America, including examples from studies of public health responses to the threat of anthrax and other emergencies linked to bioterrorism; risk communication related to HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, the West Nile virus, SARS and H1N1 influenza; vaccine risk communication, particularly in relation to the **controversies surrounding the measles-mumps-rubella vaccine** in the UK; and general pandemic preparedness and risk communication

Gaps and implications

- Blurred definitions and overlap between risk and crisis communication
- Focus on crisis rather than strategic pre-crisis risk communication
- **Lack of strategies for web based risk communications and effective use of social networking tools**
- Limited research including:
 - empirical studies on the application of risk communication principles and theories
 - evaluation studies of the effectiveness of risk communication in practice
 - integrative theoretical frameworks of risk communication
 - communication of research findings to end users and policy makers.



Can social marketing be used as tool...YES!

Prerequisite is knowledge:

- What, to whom and how we want to communicate;
- involvement relevant people and groups (primary and secondary groups);
- anticipating barriers (e.g. vaccine scepticism);
- risk perception;
- preferable (most trustworthy) sources of information;
- mode of taking decision on vaccination;
- type of information and argumentation;
- process and outcome evaluation.



ECDC risk communication training, focus on prevention of measles

Training objectives:

- To develop the capacities of public health professionals and communicators to understand, analyze and apply risk communication concepts, principles and approaches to measles prevention and control and other communicable disease threats on regional, national and/or local levels.

Modules under development:

- **Risk communication concepts: evolution and revolution**
 - **Applying concepts in everyday professional/ institutional practice**
 - **Vaccination risk perception and behaviour**
 - **Enhancing Measles Vaccine uptake-using risk communication approaches**
- the training will be piloted in January 2013
 - full course ready to be delivered in Q2 2013!





Thank you!