

'Anti-vax' presents danger to populations



Scripted Emotions

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Not even 100 years ago, the human race was fearing microscopic organisms unable to be seen by the human eye.

With the revelation of vaccines to

completely eradicate a vast majority of those medieval diseases, why are people strongly arguing against immunization now?

In the 1920s, Diphtheria claimed over 10,000 lives every year in the United States alone. In the 1940s and 1950s, children were being paralyzed, or even killed, by polio by the thousands. Most likely, your grandparents and great-grandparents had measles as a child. However, as students today, we do not have to worry about our friends not showing up to school the next day because they have become a part of a deadly outbreak. That is thanks to discovery of immunization.

In 1796, Edward Jenner invented vaccinations by observing his dairymaids. He noticed that they seemed to be immune to smallpox. Later data shows that this was because the dairymaids were exposed to it. To test his theory, Jenner used eight-year-old James Phipps as a test subject and injected cowpox into a sore on his arm. He repeated this action several times, continuing to increase the amount of smallpox

put into the sore. Phipps never contracted smallpox. Thanks to Jenner's invention, The Immunization Partnership says that vaccines save an estimated 42,000 people a year in the United States alone. This is three times more lives saved than that of seatbelts and child restraints combined. Globally, the World Health Organization (WHO) states that immunization prevents between two to three million deaths per year.

However, developing countries are not as fortunate to have the resources the U.S. has. According to WHO, every year approximately 19.5 million children under the age of one year did not receive the diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (DTP3) vaccine, and 60 percent of those children came from developing countries like Ethiopia, India, Pakistan, and Iraq.

The fact that Americans are not taking advantage of the medical supplies that we have is absurd. There are millions of families who would do anything to become immune from diseases that surround them; however the people with the supplies are refusing to utilize them.

A movement has been slowly growing that wants people to not become vaccinated. Claiming to be "anti-vax", many share their thoughts and opinions through social media.

Many well-known celebrities have been sharing their opinions on vaccination. On March 28, 2014, President Donald Trump tweeted, "Healthy young child goes to the doctor, gets pumped with massive shot of many vaccines, doesn't feel good and changes - AUTISM. Many such cases!"

According to Vaxopedia, there are no studies that link vaccines and autism. Therefore, when scrolling on social media, do not believe everything you read. When making health decisions, do your own research. Those who claim to be Anti-Vax do not realize that their actions not only affect themselves but everybody around them. This is called herd immunity. Herd immunity is when a population is protected from a disease after vaccination by stopping the germ responsible for the infection being transmitted between people. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said, "If we let ourselves become vulnerable by not vaccinating, a case that could touch off an outbreak of some disease that is currently under control is just a plane ride away." As of 2019, the only disease to be completely eradicated is smallpox. Vaccination not only helps the patient to not get the disease, but halts the disease from spreading.

Scientists and medical professionals have been able to save millions of lives a year. We are lucky to live in a country where we are not afraid of germs we cannot even see.

Sick facts about vaccination

Only two cases of diphtheria have been reported to CDC between 2002 and 2014.

Since 2012, 15 cases of rubella have been reported to CDC.

Only one disease, smallpox, has been completely eradicated from the planet

Source: CDC



Sam Haney / The Bagpiper

To view a Q&A with FCHS nurse Melissa Eldridge, go to fchsBagpiper.wordpress.com.