

## LETTER

# Attitudes towards influenza and pneumococcal vaccines in parents of asthmatic children during the COVID-19 pandemic

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Dear Editor,

We would like to share comments on the publication "Attitudes Towards Influenza and Pneumococcal Vaccines in Parents of Asthmatic Children During the COVID-19 Pandemic." Sookaromdee P. and Wiwanitkit V. stated that in different situations, parents' attitudes towards vaccines and their attitudes towards individual vaccines may differ. They noted that the normal vaccination rate decreased during the COVID-19 pandemic process, according to studies from various parts of the world.

Vaccinations are one of the most important components of children's preventive health services. During the COVID-19 pandemic, routine childhood vaccination practices have been adversely affected worldwide, and a decrease in vaccination rates has been observed.<sup>1</sup> In the World Health Organization (WHO) guideline for routine immunization services during the COVID-19 outbreak, it is recommended to know the epidemiology of country-specific vaccine-preventable diseases, to evaluate the health and immunization system resources, and to have dynamic follow-ups, all while making decisions regarding immunization services.<sup>2</sup> In accordance with the WHO recommendations, our country's health institutions have been recommended to take the necessary precautions specific to the COVID-19 pandemic period and to continue the complete national age-appropriate vaccination regimen.

It has been reported that there has been a decrease in the number of children's health follow-ups since the beginning of the pandemic in the United States.<sup>3</sup> This has led to a decrease in vaccination rates. When the country's numbers of vaccine doses administered between the January–April 2019 and January–April 2020 periods were compared, a significant decrease was observed, especially after March 2020.<sup>4</sup>

Our research<sup>5</sup> has shown that parents of asthmatic children have had increased rates and requests for their children to be vaccinated against influenza during the COVID-19 pandemic. The influenza vaccine is not included in our country's routine childhood vaccination

calendar. In the years before the pandemic, although parents of asthmatic children were advised to vaccinate their children, it was seen that the rate of vaccination in our country was not high.<sup>6</sup> We think that there has been an increase in the acceptance of influenza vaccines because of parents' concerns about the health of their children with asthma diagnoses during the pandemic process.

In a study by Zhong et al.<sup>7</sup> in Singapore, it was determined that the vaccination rates in children decreased during the COVID 19 pandemic. Similar observations are reported from the United States and Brazil.<sup>8–10</sup> However, it would not be correct to directly compare the results of these studies with our study because an influenza vaccine is not included in the routine childhood vaccination calendar of our country. Besides, our study was not conducted on a healthy child population like other studies, but on a selected patient group with asthma diagnoses.

It should be known that events that deeply affect all levels of society, such as the pandemic process, can change the attitudes of parents regarding the vaccination of their children, and that geographical and sociocultural differences can affect the decisions of the parents.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

**Murat Özer:** conceptualization (equal); data curation (equal); formal analysis (equal); funding acquisition (equal); investigation (equal); methodology (equal); project administration (equal); resources (equal); software (equal); supervision (equal); validation (equal); visualization (equal); writing – original draft (equal); writing – review & editing (equal). **Nevzat Başkaya:** conceptualization (equal); data curation (equal); formal analysis (equal); funding acquisition (equal); investigation (equal); methodology (equal); project administration (equal); resources (equal); software (equal); supervision (equal); validation (equal); visualization (equal); writing – original draft (equal); writing – review & editing (equal). **İlknur Bostancı:** conceptualization (equal); data curation (equal); formal analysis (equal); funding

acquisition (equal); investigation (equal); methodology (equal); project administration (equal); resources (equal); software (equal); supervision (equal); validation (equal); visualization (equal); writing – original draft (equal); writing – review & editing (equal).

#### DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data available on request from the authors.

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