

Navigating the Challenges of Parental Refusal for Child Immunisation

Reading time:

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Putting parents and patients at ease with immunisation is a valuable skill. MIPS is well versed in assisting doctors who have faced difficult situations such as when one separated parent wants to vaccinate their child.

Strategies and skills

Explaining management when treatment is refused

- Practice patient centred care according to the current and accepted evidence.
- Consider the likely benefit and potential harm in all clinical decisions.
- Place the interests and wellbeing of the child first.
- Ensure patients are well informed (shared decision making) noting the public interest (community at risk of vaccine preventable disease outbreaks) but respecting patient's rights.
- Improve the community's understanding and awareness of the National Immunisation Program.
- Note and advise the increasing restrictions and limitations on the non immunised child including Government policy.
- Ensure detailed notes are recorded in the medical record.

Patient autonomy

- Patients have a right to make decisions about their medical care.

- Healthcare providers can educate the patient but do not make the decision for the patient.

Clinico-legal sequelae of the certifying objection forms

- Certification of any document may have legal, medical and financial consequences.
- Generally, the only exception will be a medical exemption (medical contraindication or natural immunity certified by an immunisation provider).
- Only sign statements you know or reasonably believe are true.
- Be prepared to verify any certification.

Should members have any queries concerning the above issues please contact MIPS.
