

**THE STUDY OF LEGAL AND ETHICAL ASPECTS  
OF THE ROUTINE CHILDREN'S IMMUNIZATION IN UKRAINE  
BY USING A QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY OF PAEDIATRICIANS**

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**Introduction.** The problem of full and timely immunization coverage of children's contingent of the population is highly important for Ukraine at the present stage. According to the recommendations of the experts of the World Health Organization (WHO) immunization coverage for each of the recommended nosologies must be equal to at least 95%. However, in recent years there has been a significant discrepancy in the existing results to the needed indicator, one of the reasons of which is a lack of reliable information for the population about the effectiveness of vaccination in the prevention of infectious diseases and contradictions of its legal nature, which causes distrust of the population to this measure and the refusal of parents to vaccinate their child.

**Aim.** Considering the above, the aim of our study was to investigate the views of pediatricians, who among healthcare workers are the most involved in the process of children's vaccination, about legislative and ethical aspects of the children's routine vaccination.

**Materials and methods.** During the work the method of questionnaire survey, that is widely used in research of organizational and economic nature, was used. For processing 381 questionnaires, which were framed properly, were selected. The questionnaire was carried out among pediatricians from Kharkiv, Sumy, Poltava, Kyiv, Cherkasy regions of Ukraine.

**Results and discussion.** As is well known, today the level of immunization of children in Ukraine is much lower than in the countries of the WHO European Region, which proves ineffective functioning of the national system of routine vaccination. The relevance of the problem is also confirmed by the answers of respondents. Only 18.64% of the interviewed pediatricians believe that the system of planned vaccination of children in Ukraine is functioning effectively, and the vast majority – 81.36% of respondents – speak about the need to improve it.

Answering the question about the satisfaction of normative legal regulation of the process of planned vaccination only 9.97% of the respondents gave a positive answer, and 90.03% of respondents noted that the situation of regulation is not satisfactory and needs improvement.

Significant disputes in society are caused by a presence in the domestic legislation of norm fixing mandatory vaccination of children, which is not typical for most European countries. The respondents' opinions on the need of such a norm were divided about equally. For the necessity of such norm 38.06% of the respondents speak out; 43.83% of the respondents consider it unnecessary; 18.11% of respondents cannot answer to this question.

One of the main tasks of this study was to investigate the specific reasons for the rejection of a routine vaccination and identification of possible ways to eliminate this problem.

It should be noted that each of the surveyed pediatricians in their practice faced with the refusal of parents to carry out a routine vaccination to the child. In particular, 47.77% of respondents often faced with it in their practice, sometimes – 52.23% of respondents.

One of the reasons of the parents' refusal to vaccinate their children serves their lack of reliable information about the benefit and risks of vaccination, which was noted by 31.50% of pediatricians, and 34.91% of respondents consider that the information possessed by parents is incomplete. The percentage of respondents, who believe that the availability of information on vaccination is complete, equal to the 33.60%.

There is no doubt, that today the priority of health care system is to ensure the maximum level of vaccination coverage of children. According to the opinion of 67.98% of the surveyed pediatricians the most effective approach to ensure a high level of vaccination coverage is the implementation of an active awareness of the population on high efficiency of vaccination in the prevention of infectious diseases. The effectiveness of the legal obligation to maintain preventive vaccination for high vaccination coverage levels is supported by 10.24% of respondents. The feasibility of combining these two approaches is supported by 21.78% of respondents respectively.

The fact, that 98.69% of respondents said about the implementation of the regular explanatory work among parents regarding the necessity of preventive vaccinations for children, says about the active involvement of pediatricians in educational work on vaccination effectiveness. The share of doctors, who only sometimes carry out explanatory work, amounts to 1.31%.

**Conclusions.** Thus, it can be argued that one of the ways to increase the level of immunization coverage of children in Ukraine is an active explanatory work among people about the effectiveness of the method of routine vaccination in the prevention of infectious diseases with involvement for it not only pediatricians, but also other medical and pharmaceutical workers and the mass media.