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Anti-vaccinationists
Антивакционалисти

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Anti-vaccinationists

АНТИВАКЦИНАЛИСТИ

In this issue of Serbian Archives of Medicine, prof. Radovanović reviewed anti-vaccination movement in Balkan region [1]. The anti-vaccinationists in the region were especially active since 90's and their ability to spread miss-informations about "harmful, toxic and lethal" effects of vaccines has been increased in the past decade.

Although anti-vaccination movement was present since the first vaccines were introduced to nowadays, a little of the old quasi-arguments or statements about harmful effects of vaccines has been changed. In the United Kingdom, the Vaccination Act of 1840 provided free vaccinations for the poor and outlawed "inoculation," which at that time meant "variolation," inoculation of smallpox material [2]. The Vaccination Act of 1853 made vaccination compulsory for all infants in the first three months of life and made defaulting parents liable to a fine or imprisonment. However, the founding of Anti-Vaccination League in the same year provided the first established movement against immunization. Then, a large number of anti-vaccination tracts, books, and journals such as the *Anti-Vaccinator* (founded 1869), the *National Anti-Compulsory Vaccination Reporter* (1874), and the *Vaccination Inquirer* (1879) were published [3]. As a consequence, the majority of the population began to refuse vaccination. In 1872, vaccination rates in Stockholm decreased to 40%, and in 1874, major epidemic 1874 affected the city and led to widespread vaccination and an end to further epidemics. Anti-vaccination activities in the United States led to decrease of immunization rates and subsequently to epidemics of small pox [4].

These 19th century readings can be easily compared with modern anti-vaccine web-based statements in an internet. Rogers and Pilgrim gave probably the best definition: Anti-vaccination movement encompasses a wide range of individuals, from a few who express conspiracy theories, to educated, well informed consumers of health care, who often have a complex rationale for their beliefs, related to a "mixture of world views held about the environment, healing, holism . . . and a critical reading of the scientific and alternative literature" [5].

In this issue, an author concluded that epidemics of vaccine-preventable disease will, at least temporarily, reduce an influence of anti-vaccination movement on the general population [1].

Today, a key role against anti-vaccination plays primary-care pediatrician who can reassure the parents that vaccines are safe and effective, and that usual adverse events are mild/transient and common, while serious events are extremely rare (e.g. anaphylaxis after immunization 1/1.000.000 of vaccine doses). Pediatricians could also reassure the parents that almost all statements about vaccines found on internet are not scientific or proved by medical controlled studies. It may be useful to remind

the parents that the stories of people whose children suffered serious disease that could be prevented by vaccination also exist on the internet.

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