

K08

Keynote Lecture

Analysis of social networks wording: how to understand and fight against vaccine scepticism

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Vaccine scepticism is a growing and threatening trend. It increases the risk of disease outbreaks, such as the boycott of polio vaccine in Nigeria which resulted in the resurgence of polio in previously polio-free countries, or measles epidemics in numerous countries including the United States, as illustrated by the recent so-called "Disneyland measles outbreak". As a result, vaccine scepticism may defeat health authorities' vaccination strategies to eradicate diseases, and even compel authorities to withdraw their recommendations, as in Japan, where the health authorities had to suspend their recommendation to vaccinate against HPV in June 2013.

The objective of this presentation is to describe how social networks and more generally the web tend to accelerate and amplify this vaccine scepticism trend and, more generally, trigger profound changes in vaccination attitudes and behaviours.

For this purpose, we will present and discuss learnings gained from an observation of web and social networks content, using a platform comprising main sources of web content, results from Vaccinoscopie©, an annual survey which evaluates coverage among French children as well as their mothers' opinions on vaccination, and more generally learnings from various studies published in scientific literature. We will also describe how the web provides new tools and new opportunities to help restore vaccine confidence.

We will conclude that although social networks and more generally the Internet constitute a challenge to vaccination, they can be used to fight against vaccine scepticism. It is crucial that health authorities adapt their strategies to this new environment, or else the battle against vaccine hesitancy may be difficult to win...