

The Cultural Worldview of the Natural Lifestyle Community and its Impact of Anti-Vaccination Decisions

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Abstract

We investigate the cultural worldview of the natural lifestyle community as it negatively impacts this community's vaccination choices. Using a large sample of nurse-led conversations with parents requesting a non-medical immunization exemption for their children, we identify two cultural dimensions that impact non-vaccination decisions. The first dimension is the ecological superiority of the immune system within its natural environment and specifically vis-à-vis communicable diseases. The second dimension is the pursuit of system-centered values such as benefitting the ecosystem and benefitting the body as a whole, i.e., holistically. We propose that having internalized this cultural worldview, members of this community engage in cultural cognition, i.e., process factual information about vaccine risk in a manner that fits their cultural predispositions. An understanding of this community's cultural dimensions can help tailor immunization programs and interventions and increase immunization rates.

Keywords: *vaccine hesitancy; natural lifestyle community; cultural cognition*

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