



**Immunisation “Defaulters”:
Are They Truly Non consenting?**

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Study of School Immunisation “Defaulters”

Vaccines Offered
Second dose MMR
Booster Dose 4:1

Year of study 2004-2005

- DML Local Area Wicklow.
- 2327 children were offered school immunisation
- 195 parents listed as “defaulters”
 - 94 (48.2%) Parents “Non-consenting”
 - 101 (51.8%) Parents “Non-attending”

“Defaulters”

- Group 1

Do not consent

“Non-consenting”

- Group 2

Do not attend

“Non-attending”

Study tools

- Postal Questionnaire.
Fifteen questions.
- Three in-depth interviews.

Response rate

- 80 (41.7%) Questionnaires were completed and returned.
- When telephone and written replies, where a completed questionnaire was not forthcoming, were included a cumulative response rate of 50.5% was achieved.

Parental Characteristics

- Mother The main respondent
- 80.5% 35+ age group
- 77.5% Married
- 81.3% No Medical Card
- 40% Attended tertiary level education
- 6.3% Had a Post graduate degree

Reason given for missing immunisation

- 32 (40%) Fear of side-effects.
- 22 (27.5%) Were immunised elsewhere.
 - 10 were “Non-consenting”
 - 12 were “Non-attending”

Correlation of immunisation record

71 Cases where both official and parental records were available were compared.

- 52 (73.3%) were identical
- 19 (26.75%) differed

Deady and Thornton (2005); Harrington et al (2000)

Request for immunisation

- Twelve parents requested immunisation via the questionnaire.
- A Letter was sent to these parents entitling them to immunisation free of charge with their GP.

Category of “defaulter” and request for immunisation

Request Made	Non-Consenting		Non-Attending	
	n	%	n	%
Yes	3	6.1%	9	29%
No	46	93.9%	22	71%
Total	49	100%	31	100%

P=0.005

“Non-consenting”

V

“Non-attending”

- Those parents who are “Non-consenting” are more likely to be true non-consenters and so less likely to alter their decision.
- Those parents classified as “Non-attending” are less likely to be true non-consenters and potentially willing to avail of the offer of the missed immunisation.

Changes made to the School Immunisation Programme

- Parents are requested to give reason why they are “Non-consenting”.
- Letter sent at the end of the year to all “Non-attending” parents reminding them of the importance of the missed immunisation. They are offered the opportunity to have this immunisation from their GP free of charge.

Increased Uptake Rates Post Contact With “Non-Attending” defaulters.

- 2004-2005

MMR 89% After contact 92%

4:1 91.8% After contact 94.2%

- 2005-2006

MMR 92% After contact 93.2%

4:1 92% After contact 93.3%

Are “defaulter” parents truly non-consenting?

- 48 (60%) of the 80 parents in the study were not going to proceed with the missed immunisation and so were true non-consenters.
- 32 (40%) had already had their child vaccinated by their GP or were happy to do so and so were not true non-consenters.

In Ireland Childhood Immunisation Is Not Compulsory and The Decision To Immunise Is Parental

