



The Role of Vaccination Status Information in Evaluation of Children Arriving from the FSU

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Introduction:

Care for children, arriving from the republics of the former Soviet Union (FSU) can present challenges for the primary care and sub-specialty physicians, because many practitioners are not aware about vaccines approved and used in the countries of origin of children.

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the quality of the vaccination process in the republics of the FSU, as well as the quality of the vaccination records (translated, transcribed, and original).

Materials and methods:

All medical charts of patients born in the FSU and physically seen in the office between 07.1996 and 09.2003 (929 charts) were retrospectively evaluated for the second part of the study. Social status was defined as "home-grown children" (HGC) if those children did arrive to the United States with their biological parents/relatives and were at no point, a part of the orphanage/foster care system; and as "adopted children" (AC) if they were adopted from the orphanages/foster care system in the republics of the FSU.

We used the following inclusion criteria vaccinations, which were initiated in FSU, with at least one round of diphtheria / pertussus / tetanus

or diphtheria/tetanus vaccination given before arriving to the United States. Children with the vaccination records appearing grossly fraudulent were excluded from the study. Children were divided into two groups by date of birth - born before and after 1993 based on the fact that major changes in vaccination policies were initiated around this period.

Conclusions:

- The quality of translations of vaccination records done either through the government agencies or privately continues to be very poor. Vaccination records of adopted children are usually translated more accurately, than the records of their homegrown peers.
- There is a noticeable trend towards improving the vaccination practices in children born after 1993 in the republics of the FSU.
- The records of adoptive children indicate better vaccination practices. Despite these differences, the quality levels of said vaccinations in AC and HGC groups have yet to be studied.
- Physicians have to be aware of the potential risk of higher susceptibility to pertussus in older immigrant and adopted children, arriving from the countries of the FSU.