

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LOW IMMUNIZATION
COVERAGE IN A SELECTED ZONE IN KINGSTON AND
ST.ANDREW

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Submitted By: Veneita Wright
Supervisor: Dr. S. Maharaj

Department of Community Health and Psychiatry
Faculty of Medical Sciences
Mona Campus

ABSTRACT

The study sought to investigate some of the possible reasons which could contribute to the low immunization coverage among children in a selected Zone in Kingston and St Andrew, Jamaica. It identified children's immunization status for age based on the recommended immunization schedule of the Ministry of Health.

Permission from the Ethics Committee as well as from the Kingston and St Andrew Health Department was sought prior to undertaking the study.

A cross-sectional analytic study was conducted among 300 parents and guardians. A cluster sampling method was used to select the respective communities from which the participants were drawn. Interviewing using a questionnaire was employed to collect mainly quantitative data. Focus group discussions were held with health centre staff to ascertain their perceptions on the reasons for the low immunization coverage.

The survey revealed that most or over 85% of the parents and guardians interviewed had their children fully immunized for age. Various factors which are associated with those children who were not fully immunized for age included: missed appointment dates, inability of parents to get time from work to attend health centres, illness of children and cost. The health consequences for communities which have not attained the desired levels of immunization coverage are dire, in terms of illnesses, disabilities and possible deaths.

Recommendations were made which addressed issues at the administrative, health centre and community levels. It is believed that if these are accepted and put in place then the immunization coverage will be improved.