

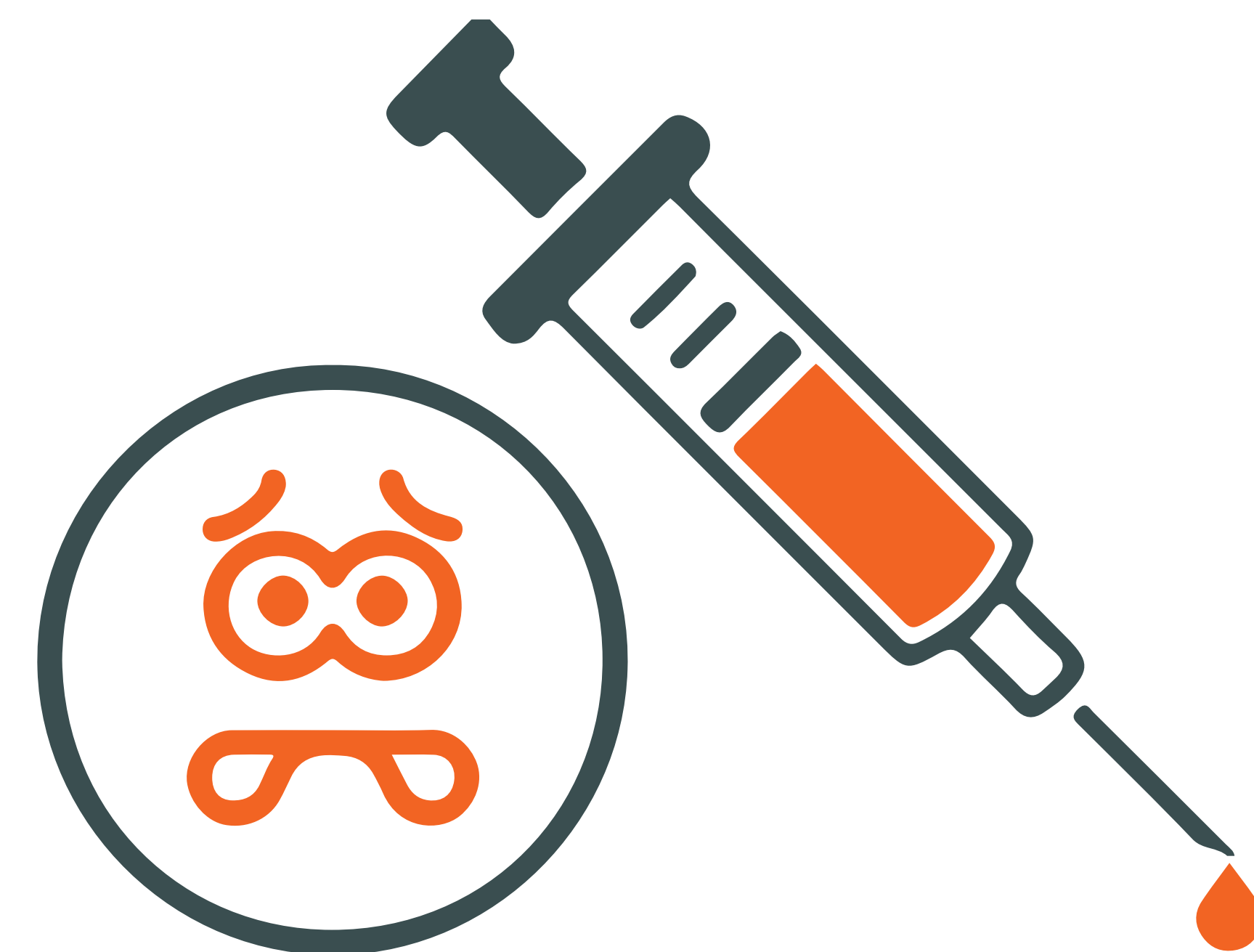
The U.S. Anti-Vaccination Epidemic:

Increasing the Acceptance of Vaccinations Without Risks to Patients' Personal Autonomy



Abstract

Many families fear to have their children immunized. These fears seem to be associated with an alarming decrease in vaccination rates. In spite of sincere efforts, physicians have failed to persuade these vaccination-hesitant (VH) families to accept the recommended immunizations. Thus, the vaccination goals in the United States have not been realized.



Without effective enforcement of immunization laws and without some new approach, this situation may not improve. The anti-vaccination surge developed after the public became complacent about infectious diseases that could be prevented by vaccines. This grew as misinformation about vaccinations spread.



With a goal of improving vaccination rates, the authors explore a few ethical limits for immunization providers. Meeting population goals for improved vaccination rates, without abridging some essential human dignity/free-will, requires patients to give their informed consents. In this context the authors reviewed the National Committee for Quality Assurance's (NCQA) vaccination risk-selection incentive, which may actually motivate doctors to remove families from their patient rosters if they refuse vaccination.



Recommendation

The authors ask that the NCQA modify its current vaccination rate ratio by adopting methods that recognize distinct patient cohorts. Further, there must be an educational program which corrects the public's misinformation about the serious risk of infectious diseases and the minimal risks associated with immunizations.

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