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Background

There is a need to support the Roma community in Ireland as there is low trust in vaccines among this community, reported by health care professionals and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

The purpose of this initiative is to build trust in childhood immunisations. This initiative was initiated by the NGO Cairde, a health information and advocacy service in Ireland. It is a collaboration between the Irish Health Service Executive's National Social Inclusion Office (NSIO), National Immunisation Office (NIO) and Cairde.

Collaboration for the education sessions

Cairde approached the NSIO about an identified need for information on vaccination among Roma community members who are participating in Cairde's Roma Education Project.

Planning meetings were held between Cairde, NIO and NSIO, to agree the topics for the educational sessions based on the needs of the Roma community. These meetings also included community representatives and healthcare professionals working with the Roma community.

The topics agreed on included:

- Child development,
- Immunisation information including: Primary Childhood Immunisation Programme, including the vaccines, vaccine preventable diseases, side effects and what to expect on the day of vaccination.
- Community based public health supports and local services

Tailored educational materials were developed and refined based on feedback from the group.

Meetings were held with Roma Cairde members who would be facilitating English-Romanian translation for the sessions. The interpreters were given a copy of the slides and transcript in advance of each education session.

Two education sessions were held online in early March 2024, with 15 participants from the Roma community at each session.

Methods of Evaluation of the initiative

- (1) Surveys: Anonymous pre- and post-evaluation surveys were developed using standardised questions from the World Health Organisation 'Behavioural and Social Drivers (BeSD) of Vaccination tool for achieving high uptake. The survey results were analysed on Microsoft Excel.
- (2) Focus group: An evaluation meeting was planned with the output from this described narratively.

Results of Education Session Evaluation

The pre-session survey response rate was 40% (n=6) and the post-session survey response rate was 93% (n=14).

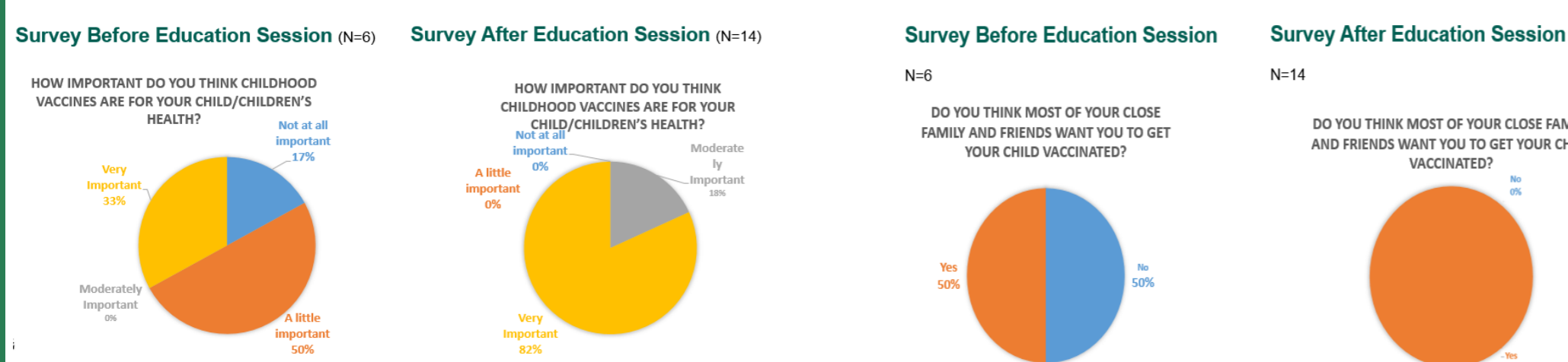


Figure 1: Perception of importance of vaccination 'Thinking and Feeling Domain'

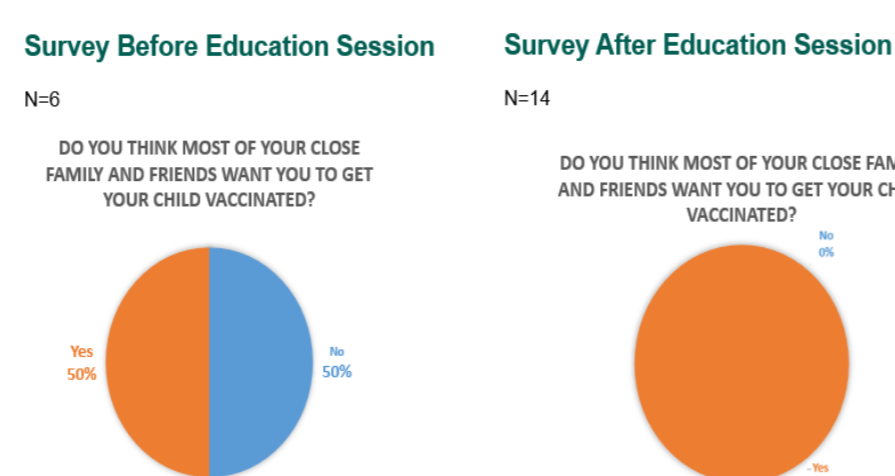


Figure 2: Perception of family and friends intention to vaccinate 'Social Process Domain'

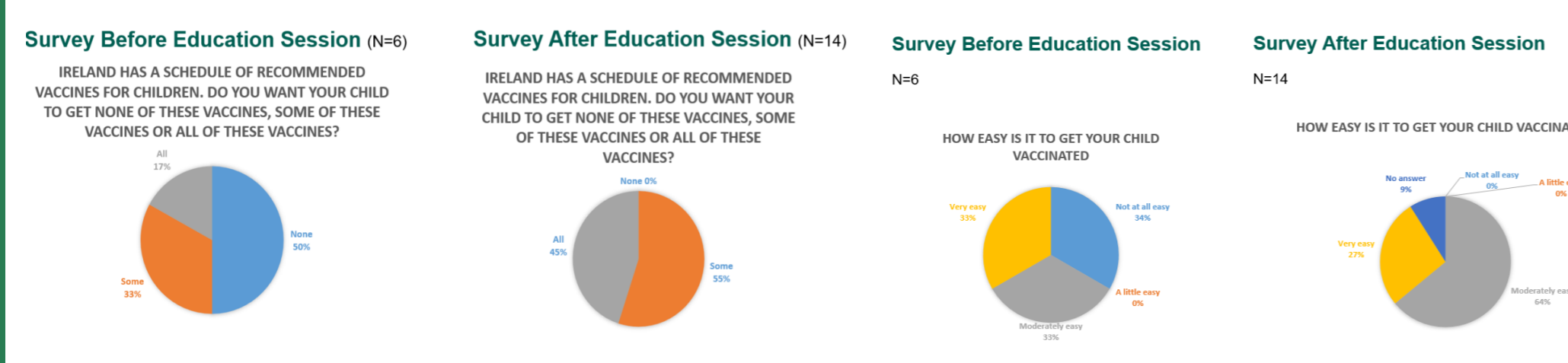


Figure 3: Perception intention to vaccinate 'Motivation Domain'

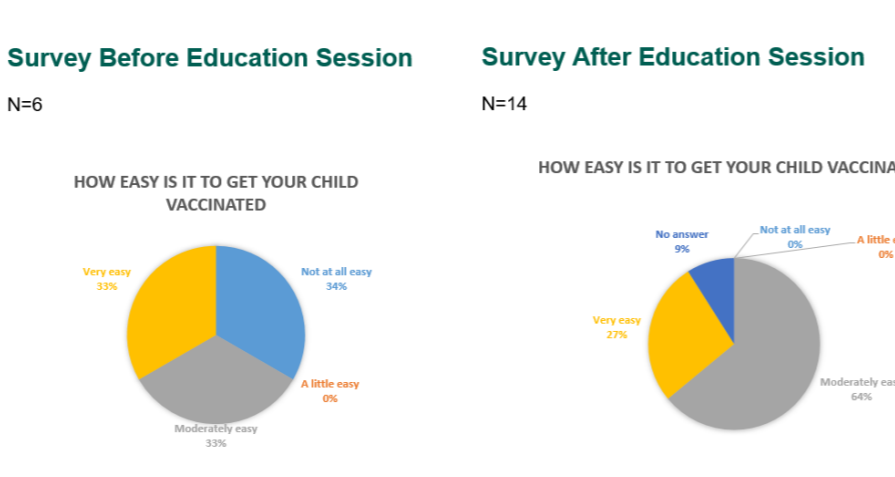


Figure 4: Ease of access practical Issues Domain'

Survey before education sessions.

What would you like to know about vaccines for your child/children?

- Side effects after the vaccine (6 people)
- Long term effects of vaccines (5 people)
- Information about the different vaccines (1 person)
- Not interested (2 people)

Survey after the education sessions.

What did you like about the vaccine education sessions?

- New, important or useful information (7 people)
- Intension to make an appointment (2 people)

Do you have any suggestions how we could improve the education sessions?

- Roma testimonials: 'I wish they could share more experiences and maybe hear that someone went through the same side effects and recovered well.' (1 person)
- Vaccine ingredients (2 people)

Results of the Initiative Evaluation Meeting

There was agreement that a high level of collaboration was evident to plan the two education sessions. A plan was made for NSIO, NIO and Cairde to work together to deliver a further workshop in the Autumn 2024 and to use feedback to incorporate a translated video into the session. The NIO plan to explore including parent testimonials or experiences into communication materials.

There was consensus that NGOs, peer outreach workers and health advocates are key partners to reach and engage with the Roma community with vaccine information.

Results of the Roma Health Network Evaluation

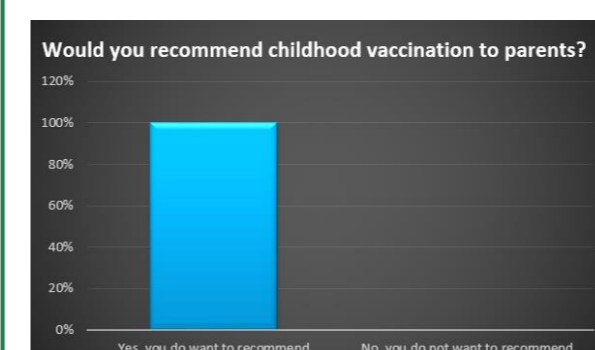


Figure 9. Recommend childhood Vaccines.

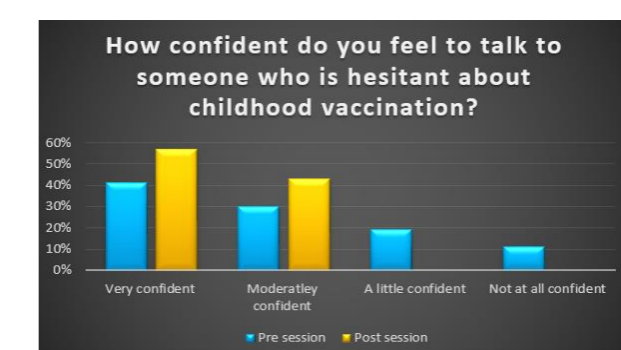


Figure 10. Confidence in discussing vaccine hesitancy.

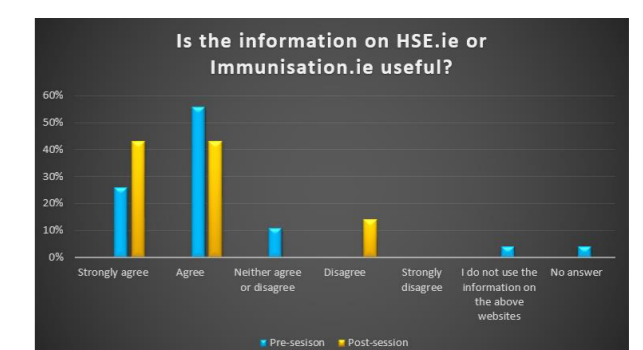


Figure 11. National immunisation material usefulness.

The information needed to encourage childhood vaccination in the Roma community.

- *Content of information:* safety, side effects, benefits, tailored
- *Immunisation Materials:* Translated, images, videos, testimonials
- *In-person sessions:* Own language, Peer led, One-to-one or group, community or home settings

The best way to reach people in the Roma Community with information about Childhood vaccines.

- *Culturally appropriate*
- *Community leaders*
- *Peer support network &/ links with community HCWs*
- *Trusted organisations*
- *Other approaches*

Conclusion

The results show that community engagement and a partnership approach may build trust in vaccines and improve drivers of vaccination among Roma community members in Ireland.

This collaboration is an opening for further dialogue and engagement for vaccine acceptance among the Roma community.

Based on this initiative, and the findings from the evaluation, training of peer-support/community health workers nationally through a Roma Health Network education meeting was conducted.

Evaluation of these trainings will inform the co-development of tailored information and resources for use by health care professionals and peer support workers, working with the Roma community.

Tailored Resources Developed



Figure 14. Childhood Vaccination Presentation and Vaccine Acceptance Presentation : Available at: https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/primarycare/socialinclusion/travellers-and-roma/roma/roma-health-network-presentation-childhood-immunisations-15524_npx

References

1. Behavioural and social drivers of vaccination: tools and practical guidance for achieving high uptake [Internet]. [cited 2024 August 09]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/publications-detail-redirect/9789240049680>