

Measles in Minnesota

By ACSH Staff — March 22, 2011

After growing weary of reading headlines announcing vaccine-preventable outbreaks, we decided to research which states permit parents to forgo vaccinating their kids due to so-called “philosophical exemptions” — which allow opting out of required immunizations for no reason whatsoever. One of these states — Minnesota — allows these exemptions, and is now experiencing a [measles outbreak](#) [1]. So far, six new cases have emerged in Hennepin County with three cases occurring in unvaccinated children and two cases including children too young for the MMR (measles-mumps-rubella) vaccine. The Minnesota Health Department expects these numbers to increase as more families refuse to vaccinate their kids.

Of particular concern is the finding that three of these cases occurred among the state’s Somali-American population, which has a low vaccination rate. According to Idil Abdul, co-founder of the Somali American Autism Foundation in Minneapolis, misinformation about vaccine safety has led to deep-seated vaccination fears in this community.

ACSH's Dr. Gilbert Ross points out, “While the Somali-American community has been the victim of superstitions promulgated back in Africa and the fraudulent and discredited findings from the Wakefield ‘study,’ even among our own native-born population we have well-educated parents who believe the same destructive mythology. In fact, our pockets of vaccine hysteria seem to be concentrated among the better-educated — who seemingly have little better to do than to look for health bogeymen where none exist.”

Measles, which kills almost 200,000 worldwide each year, is nearly eradicated in the U.S. Statistics show that vaccination has reduced the number of American cases from 441,000 just pre-vaccine to a mere 140 in 2008. And those cases are almost always among the unvaccinated.

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[1] http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/42195206/ns/health-infectious_diseases/?ocid=twitter