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How old is vaccine hesitancy?

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During the last decades the phenomenon of vaccine hesitancy has emerged over the purpose and essence of preventive vaccine programs in the global world. It seems that public health discussions and concerns are focused on defending the vaccination issue rather than exploring the justified need for vaccine programs in the 21st century. Vaccine hesitancy issue is not the product of the 21st century; it has accompanied vaccination throughout the history for more than three centuries. The definition of vaccine hesitancy is not unique and stable, its understanding differs among the scientists and public according to the period of time, social, political and cultural circumstances of certain territory. Although the history of inoculation or the avanguard of vaccination did not start with Edward Jenner (it started long ago among African tribes), his work is well documented and available to the research and shows us that his work was accompanied with a negative connotation in that period of time. The vaccine hesitancy safely has survived throughout the history from the 18th century to the 21st century, from the smallpox inoculation to the MMR vaccine in the 20th century to the HPV hesitancy in the 21st century. Alongside with the first vaccination laws, in different parts of the world, anti-vaccination movements and vaccination hesitancy developed. Throughout the history the vaccination was used in the sense of biological welfare for the humankind and in the sense of biological warfare for the humankind too. Conspiracy theories are the cause of large vaccine hesitancy. In this paper, we will explore the history of vaccine hesitancy in different periods of time and in different countries.

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