

[Jeroen Luyten](#) and Philippe Beutels
‘Egocentric’ vaccination: the authors reply

Article (Accepted version)

Original citation:

Luyten, Jeroen and Beutels, Philippe (2016) ‘Egocentric’ vaccination: the authors reply. *Health Affairs*, 35 (5). ISSN 0278-2715

DOI: [10.1377/hlthaff.2016.0371](https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2016.0371)

© 2016 The Authors

This version available at: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/66807/>

Available in LSE Research Online: June 2016

LSE has developed LSE Research Online so that users may access research output of the School. Copyright © and Moral Rights for the papers on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. Users may download and/or print one copy of any article(s) in LSE Research Online to facilitate their private study or for non-commercial research. You may not engage in further distribution of the material or use it for any profit-making activities or any commercial gain. You may freely distribute the URL (<http://eprints.lse.ac.uk>) of the LSE Research Online website.

This document is the author’s final accepted version of the journal article. There may be differences between this version and the published version. You are advised to consult the publisher’s version if you wish to cite from it.

Reply Luyten-Beutels,

We are grateful for the opportunity to clarify this issue. We were using the VZV example to illustrate the variety of distributive effects of vaccination programs and to discuss potential intergenerational inequity as an additional layer of complexity for vaccine policy making. We used the term 'egocentric' to conceptualize the difference with 'altruistic' vaccination, depending on how benefits and risks are distributed over vaccinated and non-vaccinated parties.

In biomedical terms we believe there is sufficient evidence to show that exogenous boosting of immunity against Varicella-Zoster Virus (VZV) exists, but not in all individuals and in all circumstances where an exposure to chickenpox occurs.[1] We fully acknowledge that there is disagreement on this, and that there remains high uncertainty about the extent of the population-level impact of childhood VZV vaccination on herpes zoster incidence. We therefore referred to an extensive systematic review that reflects and grades the diversity of the evidence.[1] Despite a discrepancy in strength of evidence – a definite highly beneficial, immediate and lasting impact on chickenpox cases, hospitalisations and deaths in children versus a temporary rise of uncertain magnitude in herpes zoster disease in older generations – this issue has contributed to postponing the introduction of childhood VZV vaccination in many countries. We provided ethical arguments to overcome this issue elsewhere. [2]

We are aware that anti-vaccine lobbyists may use article fragments out of context, but we believe that should not stop us from holding academic discussions in a spirit of openness.

1. Ogunjimi, B., P. Van Damme, and P. Beutels, *Herpes Zoster Risk Reduction through Exposure to Chickenpox Patients: A Systematic Multidisciplinary Review*. PLoS One, 2013. **8**(6): p. e66485.
2. Luyten, J., B. Ogunjimi, and P. Beutels, *Varicella-zoster virus vaccination under the exogenous boosting hypothesis: two ethical perspectives*. Vaccine, 2014. **32**(52): p. 7175-8.