

Abstract

My thesis is concerned with a public resistance to compulsory vaccination, which has only recently become a problem to watch in Czech Republic. It aims to demonstrate different ways of interaction between the expert medical discourse, which advocates and sanctions vaccination, and the discourse of a particular group of vaccination objectors. They include different conceptualizations of expert knowledge, evaluating a legitimacy of the expert institutions and a conflict between experts' claim to take care of a public health and a demand to put the responsibility for one's health in the hands of each citizen. These motives also take places in two general conceptualisations of health and disease. The conceptualisation which is typical for vaccination objectors stresses the importance of a natural and holistic treatment but it also shares some similarities with the expert conceptualisation. These differences and similarities have been systemically examined in a qualitative analysis of 18 interviews with parents refusing to vaccinate their children. It proposes an elementary classification of effective substances along with the criteria of their harmfulness which include rational calculations of particular risks but also the synthetic nature of the substance, its manufacturing and distribution by official expert institutions and the lack of its meaningful relation to complex individual situations. This kind of substances includes most of the vaccines and synthetic drugs, on the other hand there are particular non-invasive kinds of treatment that are considered beneficial, especially homeopathy but also a natural contact with microbial pathogens. The analysis has showed that this classification of substances has a close relationship to the parents' decision not to vaccinate their children which needs to be embedded not only in particular evaluations of vaccination-related risks but also in some very basic ideas about the treatment and the general life-style.