

School-based HPV immunization: findings from a qualitative study in Mongolia

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INTRODUCTION

Mongolia amended the Law on Immunization in 2023 to include the HPV vaccine as a mandatory immunization. Immunization with the HPV vaccine will begin nationwide in October of 2024:

- Target Age: 11 years old
- Target Sex: Both sexes
- Interval doses: 1 dose
- Delivery strategy: School-based

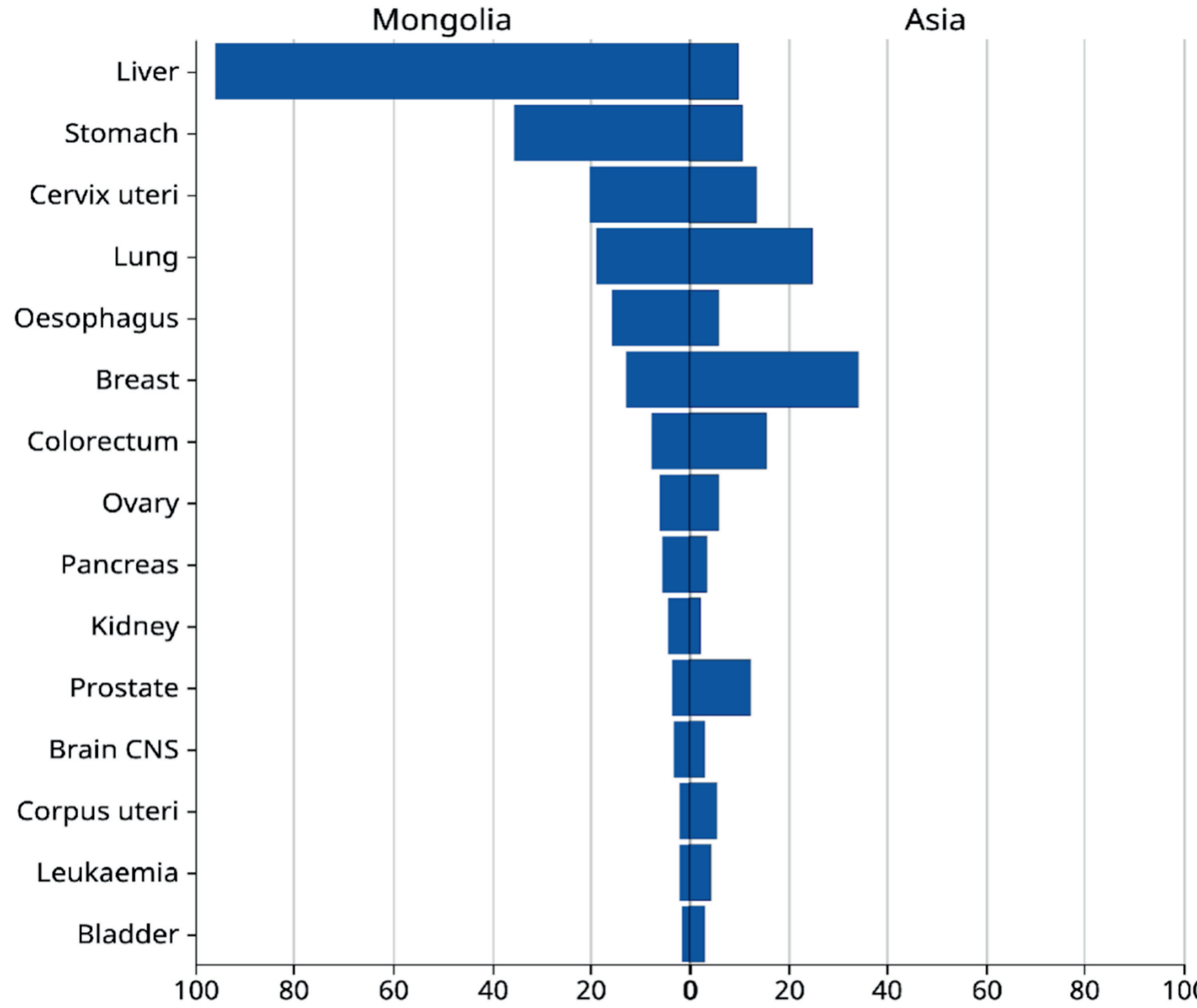


Figure 1. Age-Standardized Rate (World) per 100,000, Incidence, in 2022

Mongolia vs Asia (Top 15 cancer sites)

Cancer TODAY | IARC - <https://gco.iarc.who.int/today>
Data version: Globocan 2022 (version 1.1)
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Cervical cancer ranks in the **top 3** of cancer incidence and mortality rates in Mongolia.

The participation of secondary school teachers and staff is essential in organizing school-based immunization. Therefore, this study was conducted in order to determine the issues to be considered in the organization of the newly introduced vaccination.

METHODS

- Study data collection methodology: Focus group interviews
- Study data were collected from May to June in 2024.
- The study involved 13 elementary school teachers and employees from 4 regions of Mongolia and 3 districts of Ulaanbaatar.
- Interviews were organized with 6-8 people
- Interview results were processed in the NVivo 14 program.
- This study was approved by the Research ethics committee, MNUMS, (no. 2024/3-06 dated 14 June, 2024)

NVIVO



Figure 2. Focus group participants

RESULTS

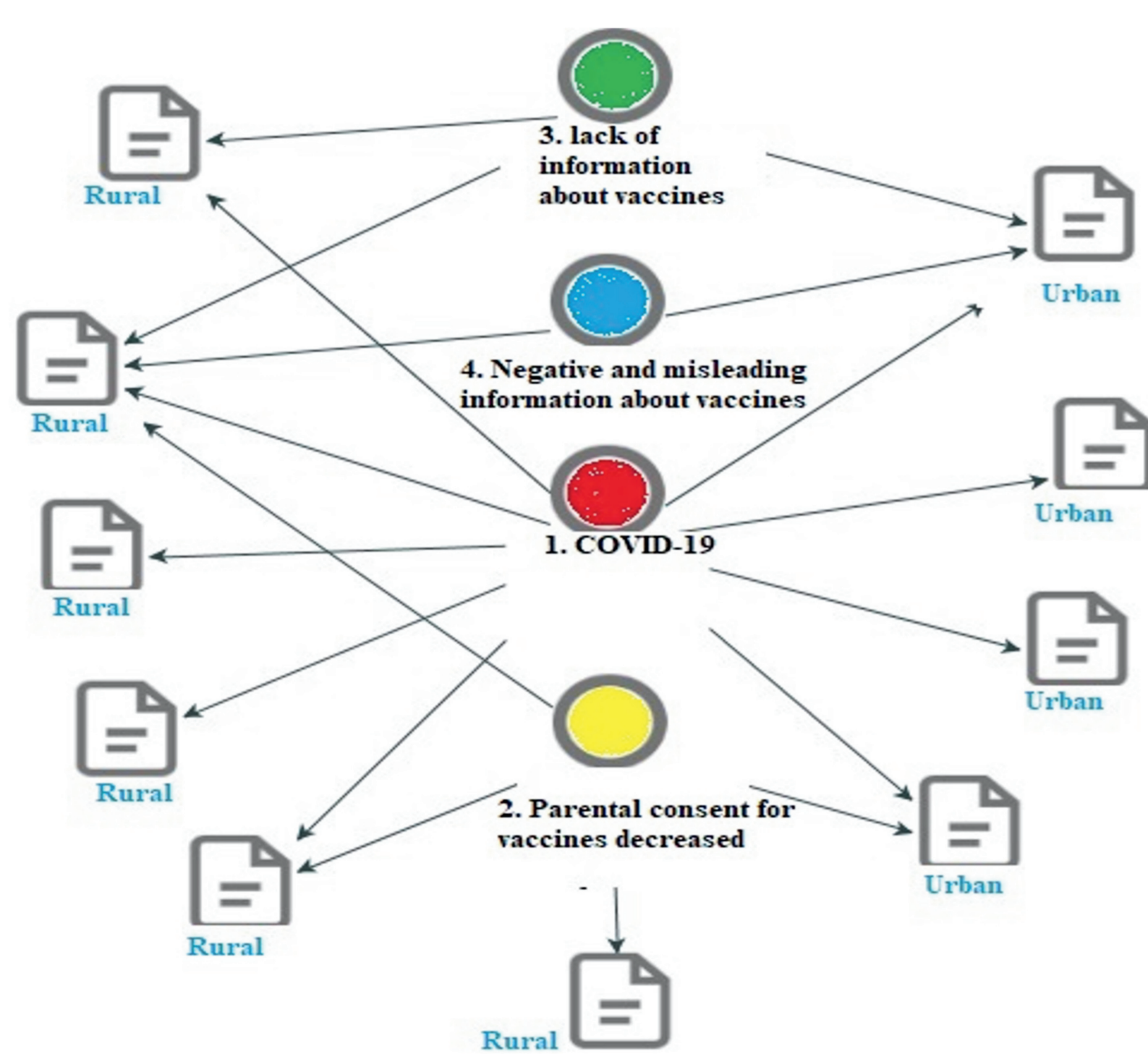


Figure 3. Factors affecting immunization coverage

A total of 13 interviews were conducted, 30 per cent of which were in urban areas and 70 per cent in rural areas.



In focus group interviews, secondary school teachers point out that parents' confidence in vaccines and immunization coverage is decreasing.

Factors affecting immunization coverage

1. COVID-19
2. Parental consent for vaccines decreased
3. Lack of information about vaccines
4. Negative and misleading information about vaccines

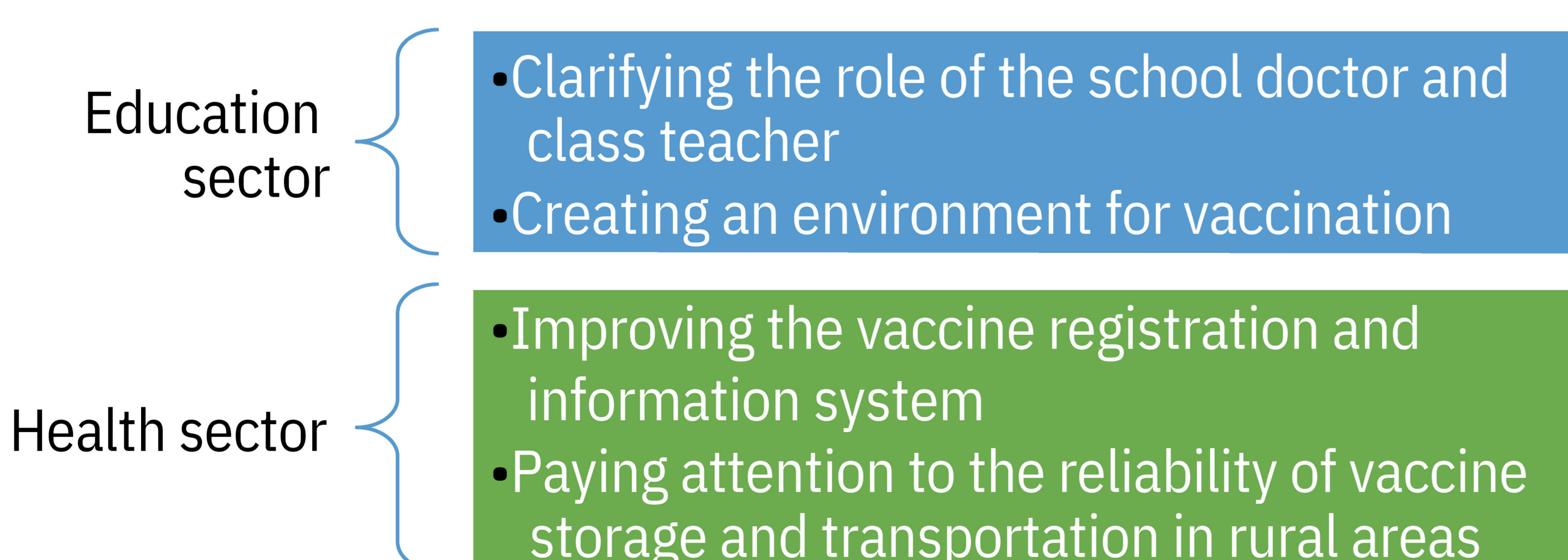


Figure 4. Factors affecting immunization coverage

School-based immunization is carried out in the school doctor's office, classroom, sports, and art room. Parents often fear that the conditions and requirements for vaccination are inadequate and that there may be some risk.

CONCLUSION

Collaboration between the education and health sectors is essential for successful school-based immunization, and there is a great need for training and information for parents and school staff.

We thank the Ministry of Health of Mongolia and UNICEF for supporting this study.