

[t]he reasons for vaccination refusal are complex, varied and not infrequently wistful. They include religious or philosophical beliefs, concerns about safety and efficacy, beliefs that vaccine-preventable diseases do not pose serious health risks, objections to mandatory programs and excessive government interference and objections to immunization as being “unnatural.” ... [I]mmunization programs have become a victim of their own success. It is worth reminding patients that (to take only one example) the complications of

measles include otitis media, pneumonia, croup, diarrhea and encephalitis, and that the fatality rate is 2–3 per 1000 cases.<sup>2</sup>

And thus the interminable debate continues, at least in part because we don’t know what we’re fighting about. Durbach makes it abundantly clear that it’s not about the diseases, no matter how strongly we medical types might think it is.

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#### REFERENCES

1. Martin S. “Be wise, immunize” message getting through. *CMAJ* 2002;167(1):68.
2. Vaccination: refuting the refusals [editorial]. *CMAJ* 2000; 163(7):801.

## One thousand words



**Ignorance is disease.** First-year medical students at McMaster University enjoy the opportunity to arrange an 8-week clinical elective in the location and specialty of their choice. This September, students donated photos taken during their electives to a silent auction at the International Women’s and Children’s Health Symposium at McMaster, raising over \$1200 for “Save the Mothers,” a Canadian NGO working to reduce maternal mortality in Uganda. *CMAJ* has selected 3 for publication. Shawna Silver took this photo during National Health Week in Wenchi, Ghana. We liked the feeling of empowerment in this beautifully composed photograph; this posed group seems, poignantly, to be ready to take charge of their own future. The photographer writes: “For one week a year, the University of Ghana medical school closes and the students spread across the country to provide health education. This year’s topic was tuberculosis. I ... was sent to Wenchi and the Brong Ahafo region, about 350 km from Accra, the capital. Children were fascinated with my digital camera and even more so in seeing themselves on the screen. The writing is on the wall. They wanted to learn all they could. And, we were there to help.”