The year 2020 will be remembered for the COVID-19 pandemic and its huge worldwide effects on humans, quality of life, and economics. This year ended with a glimmer of hope when the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the use of COVID-19 vaccinations among people age 16 and up. The vaccine campaign was a success, as the number of new infections declined rapidly despite the easing of lockdown restrictions in countries with a high vaccination rate. However, limitations on the activities of the unvaccinated population (mainly teenagers and children), both in school and outside, are still needed. Epidemiological data show that the susceptibility to and transmission of COVID-19 among children decreases with age. Although children tend to develop asymptomatic disease and present more favorable outcomes than adults, the recent emergence of new COVID-19 variants increase children’s risk of disease transmission and the severity of disease.1,2,3

In May 2021, the FDA and the Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use (CHMP) approved the use of the COVID-19 vaccine for teenagers age 12 and up. Some countries are considering whether to extend vaccine eligibility to children ages 12–16 in the expectation that this step will contribute to controlling the pandemic, which is extremely important in light of the spread of new COVID-19 variants. An increase in the vaccination rate will contribute to reaching herd immunity and the recovery of the global economy. In order to apply such a strategy, it is important to understand hesitancy among parents regarding administering the vaccine their children, since parents are usually the decision-makers for them.

Israel’s vaccination campaign began in mid-December 2020, and by June 3, 2021, 59.35% of the population were fully vaccinated. The highest 7-day moving average of new daily infections was 8,624 cases on January 17, 2021. This number gradually declined as the percentage of the vaccinated population increased, decreasing to 15 new daily infections by the beginning of June 2021. Due to the spread of the delta variant, the weekly average of new cases increased to 450 by the beginning of July. Based on a nationwide observational study in Israel, the effectiveness of the vaccine against symptomatic COVID-19 infection, COVID-19-related hospitalization and COVID-19-related death exceeded 96% across all age groups. There exists a positive correlation between the vaccination rate and age: among people age 70 and up the vaccination rate exceeds 95%, among people ages 50–70 it is approximately 90%, and among people 20–40 it is approximately 80%. The percentage of people vaccinated in Israel has plateaued over the last two months; the vaccination rate (first dose) increased only by 2.3%, from 60.7% on April 1, 2021 to 63% on June 1, 2021.4,5,6 This phenomenon also exists in other countries and is probably due to vaccine hesitancy. Vaccine hesitancy is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a delayed acceptance of vaccination or a refusal to be vaccinated despite the availability of vaccination services.7 The causes of vaccine hesitancy vary by country and are vaccine-specific, indicating a need to strengthen the capacity of national programs to identify local causal factors and develop appropriate strategies.8,9