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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Unvaccinated children spread pertussis across communities during an outbreak, a new study finds.**

While more than 90 percent of Oregon children are vaccinated against pertussis, also known as whooping cough, this protection is not enough to stop pertussis from spreading when those choosing not to vaccinate share social networks, schools, or other connections, according to a new study by the Oregon Immunization Program.

“The Timing of Pertussis Cases in Unvaccinated Children in an Outbreak Year: Oregon 2012,” was published in the January edition of The Journal of Pediatrics, and suggests that relaxing immunization recommendations and school requirements could cause vaccine-preventable disease to spread.

For the study, epidemiologists Steve Robison and Juventila Liko looked at a 2012 pertussis outbreak in Northwest Oregon. They found that pertussis cases among unvaccinated children were three times more likely to be earlier than cases among vaccinated children. This indicates that unvaccinated children were more frequently the source of pertussis disease that then passed on to other children.

As the outbreak spread, the earliest cases in new disease-affected areas were also mostly among the unvaccinated. It is possible, the study found, that the unvaccinated have a greater role in how outbreaks develop beyond simply not helping build community protection.

“Parents who are reluctant to immunize their children often have social networks and other connections to others with similar lack of immunizations,” Robison said. “This may provide a way for infectious disease to spread across communities.”

“The Timing of Pertussis Cases in Unvaccinated Children in an Outbreak Year: Oregon 2012,” can be found at [http://www.jpeds.com/article/S0022-3476\(16\)31542-6/fulltext](http://www.jpeds.com/article/S0022-3476(16)31542-6/fulltext).

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