

Question

In certain areas of Midlands, we are experiencing issues with Muslim communities refusing to have their children vaccinated with the influenza nasal spray due to it containing porcine as a stabiliser. This vaccine is used for children and vulnerable elderly at serious risk of catch flu. It saves lot of pain and sicknesses in the community affecting thousands of people.

The children's flu programme is an extremely important since it not only protects the child itself but also protects vulnerable family members and the wider community. This then has huge benefits on the local health system, 94% lower flue like illnesses in primary age children and 74% less visits to A &E

So, in the bigger interest of the society's health can this vaccine be given to children? What do the scholars say about the permissibility of in flu vaccine that contains pork gelatine, is this allowed?

A concerned Muslim Nurse

Fatwa on Flu vaccine containing Porcine gelatine

In the name of Allah, the Kind the Caring

The flu vaccine that contains porcine gelatin is a simple nasal spray that is particularly useful and easy to administer to children. It is administered to children who are susceptible to flu and have other problems like asthma which is exacerbated by the flu. It has been shown to reduce A &E admissions and other complications considerably.

Firstly, its important to understand the nature of the porcine gelatin. This is a pure product and is exactly same as the cow gelatin, goat or any other animals' gelatin. It has same protein structure, same properties and same colour, texture and taste. You would not be able to distinguish the porcine gelatin from the others. In light of this fact it is argued that it doesn't matter what its origin is. A similar fatwa was issued by Mufti Ali Jumma the Grand Mufti of Egypt about Pig products including insulin.

Secondly, this is for a medical purpose, it's not consumption or eating. The nasal vaccine is important preventative measure that has been shown empirically to reduce lot of suffering in vulnerable children. This then falls under the well-known category of 'darurah' necessity, required and needed. The Quran teaches: "He has made unlawful for you the carcass, the blood, pork and animals over which any name other than Allah's has been invoked. However, if one is dying of hunger then a small amount can be eaten in order to survive, Allah is Forgiver and Most Compassionate." (Al Baqara:173) From this jurist have reasoned that when something that is forbidden is needed for survival then it becomes permissible. So, if porcine gelatin was forbidden in this situation, it becomes permissible. The other rule from this is: "What is permissible for a particular need can be used according to the amount required." Thirdly, my fatwa is based on this powerful principle *Istihala* found in books of



Fiqh: “*Istihala* means the change of the properties of a substance leading to the removal of its impure nature. Scholars have unanimously agreed that intoxicating liquids are deemed pure if they spontaneously change into vinegar. The majority of Hanafi, Maliki scholars and Imam Ahmed said that *istihala* renders impure substance pure. As mentioned above, there is no scholarly contention on the purity of an intoxicant that has spontaneously turned into vinegar. They based their opinion on the following:

- the description of impurity no longer applies to the substance due to the change in its essence; an analogy is the purity of an intoxicant when it is converted into vinegar; the blood of deer when it is converted into musk, an expensive fragrance; and the purity of a blood clot when it is converted into a piece of flesh [during gestation]. This is the opinion implemented for fatwa.” (p1738 Encyclopaedia of Fatwa published by Dar la Ifta Al misriyya)

In light of these evidences we conclude that the nasal flu vaccine containing porcine gelatin is permissible for use.

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