

Parents, adults and vaccinated

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According to a study to which also FBK researchers contributed, parental vaccination can help contain the spread of measles in Italy

With the current provisions on child vaccinations, measles will not be eliminated in Italy before 2045. If instead adults were also vaccinated, who never had measles, the disease could be defeated earlier.

This is supported by a study conducted by **Fondazione Bruno Kessler**, the Bocconi University of Milan and the Northeastern University of Boston. The researchers' work, published today on eLife, took into consideration in particular parents who have not yet contracted the disease and who had not been vaccinated in the past, and whom could be offered to get vaccinated together with their children. In this way – scholars argue – the elimination of measles in Italy could be achieved at least 5-15 years earlier.

*"The situation we observe in Italy, characterized by a majority of measles cases among adults, is typical of high-income countries," **Valentina Marziano**, FBK researcher and first author of the study published in eLife, explained. "Current vaccination policies target children and teenagers, leaving a large part of the population that had not been vaccinated in the past at risk of contracting the disease. Our study, based on mathematical models, shows that continuing with the current vaccination policies, the elimination of measles in Italy is unlikely to occur before 2045."*

"Thanks to the additional parental vaccination, the disease could be defeated more quickly and we could succeed in eliminating measles in Italy between 2030 and 2040 – Stefano Merler, FBK researcher and coordinator of the study – said. Other actions to involve adults in general could be just as effective and further studies to verify the economic sustainability of these solutions should be carried out, but parental vaccination seems to represent a particularly promising solution".

In Italy, the measles vaccine should be given between 12 and 15 months of age and a new policy has recently been introduced to cover children and teenagers who have not yet been vaccinated at the time of school entry. In recent years, however, measles has not affected young children only. Even adults over the age of 20 often get sick, and the average age of those in Italy who contract

measles is 27 years.

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