

THE *informed* PARENT

SEPTEMBER 1992 THE BULLETIN OF 'THE INFORMED PARENT GROUP' ISSUE 1

WELCOME!

Welcome to the first newsletter of the informed parent!

This is the first of a series of quarterly newsletters in which we hope to give the facts on immunisation and allied topics.

And we hope that those reading them will find the information useful and beneficial in a climate where knowledge about immunisation can be so one-sided.

WHO ARE WE?

Well initially we were a very small group of concerned parents, worried about the safety and effectiveness of immunisation. Our numbers have grown - but still in a small way - and we have drawn up our own list of aims and objectives, calling our organisation The Informed Parent.

Our aims are to help inform parents who are seeking a wider view on the subject and also offer support to parents who feel very isolated in their decision to refuse vaccinations for their families.

One of our founder members is the mother of two small children and it was when she read an article in her local newspaper about immunisation that she became alarmed.

"I decided to look further into the subject and have discovered a great deal of information that throws light on a

completely different side of the vaccination issue," she said.

Before reading the article, this mother was probably the same as any other parent - unsure, frightened but believing that vaccination was the only choice.

"However, since acquiring various sources of information, my mind is completely changed and I will refuse further vaccinations for my children," she says.

AIMS

So what is this "information" and why isn't it more widely available?

This is what The Informed Parent will try to do; to offer parents the way to making up their own minds by giving them access to all the available literature that we can find. Elsewhere in this newsletter is information about our aims and objectives and details of how to become a member.

We hope that, whatever your ultimate decision, you will want to know more about immunisation.

CAN YOU HELP?

We'd like to hear from you! So feel free to put pen to paper to tell us about your experience with immunisation or vaccinations.

What are your views? How does your doctor react to your questions? Have you nursed your child through one of the childhood illnesses? Do you think vaccinations have helped your children?

And if you could also send us cuttings from newspapers and magazines we'd be grateful. Before we can reproduce them, we need

to know the exact name of the publication and the date of the article - so don't forget to include that.

And if you have any queries about immunisation we are thinking of starting a question and answer feature in our newsletters with the response coming from a fully-qualified homeopath.

Please send your letters, cuttings and questions to: The Editor, The Informed Parent, 29 Greyhound Road, Sutton, Surrey, SM1 4BY.

A DEBATE ABOUT VACCINATION

Some of you reading this newsletter may well wonder just what is being talked about.

Surely the view that vaccination is a great boon to modern civilisation is all there is to it?

Well we all thought so too - until we started reading information from a growing band of well-educated people who think differently... *Continued inside.*

THE MEASLES VACCINE - TWO POINTS.

Here is a sample of two points of view about the measles vaccine. According to the health secretary there were no child deaths in England and Wales from measles for the first time last year (1991). The suggestion is that this is linked to the record number of children vaccinated against measles - 92% were vaccinated against measles, mumps and rubella. (See the cutting from The Times reproduced in this newsletter.)

A leaflet supplied by Meieux UK Ltd., and available to parents in clinics says about measles:

"Measles is an acute viral illness which is highly infectious. Although often considered a normal part of growing up complications have been reported in as many as 1 in 15 cases and these include ear infections, bronchitis, pneumonia, convulsions, and inflammation of the brain which occurs in one in 5,000 cases.

"Since the introduction of measles immunisation in 1968 the number of notified cases has dropped from hundreds of thousands each year to an average of less than 100,000 but there is still an average of 13 deaths a year as a direct result of measles - deaths which should never have occurred if parents had accepted immunisation for these children.

"Adverse reaction to the measles vaccine are few when compared with

the incidence of complications in natural measles."

THE SECOND VIEW

Trevor Gunn B.Sc., L.C.H. a graduate in medical biochemistry and practising homeopath, writes in his booklet Mass Immunisation:

"Measles is essentially a mild childhood disease with very few or no complications in the vast majority of cases. However, some individuals do develop certain problems such as encephalitis (inflammation of the brain), which can be fatal. The risk of encephalitis is a major factor which is cited to justify the use of measles vaccine.

OTHER FACTORS

"Recent evidence suggests that between one in a thousand and one in five thousand children who contract measles naturally may develop encephalitis, and in later years between one in one thousand and one in a

million may develop sub acute sclerosing panencephalitis (SSPE). However, other factors do play an important role in the development of encephalitis and measles-associated deaths, such as serious head injuries, close exposure to certain animals, poor nutrition and failure to treat complications.

PROVEN VACCINE DAMAGE

"The real risks of serious complications arising from contracting measles in the average child may be extremely small and without necessary contributory factors most children may not be at risk at all.

"Furthermore, the measles vaccine itself can cause encephalitis and subsequent death - the particular strain of measles virus used in the vaccine has been isolated from the spines victims proving that the vaccine has caused the encephalitis.

"A study on West Germany reported that one in 17,650 individuals vaccinated against measles developed temporary encephalitis and one in 2,500 had neurological complications.

What's more, doctors admit that notified side effects of the vaccine are an under-estimate of the true number."

WHY THE RESISTANCE AGAINST VACCINATION?

Why are some people against vaccination? Andrew Tyler writing in the London Evening Standard in September 1991 expresses the view of American GP, Dr Richard Moskowitz.

He suggests that there are few greater "insults" one can offer the immature immune system of a young child than to introduce, directly into his/her bloodstream, the foreign proteins or live viruses that compose modern vaccines.

"The usual port of entry for, say, the measles virus, is not the bloodstream but the respiratory tract: the bug is inhaled in droplets," writes Tyler. "This 'slow' entry allows the body time to mount an effective immune response. And it is known that the virus is finally eliminated by sneezing and coughing - the very same route by which it entered."

Moskowitz argues that such 'outpourings' are a perfectly normal and healthy physical phenomenon and signal the maturation of the child's immune system. In other words, these outbreaks of childhood diseases are rarely serious and can have long-term

beneficial results.

But when the vaccine is introduced directly into the circulation, by contrast, it is given free and immediate access to the major immune organs and tissues without any obvious way of getting rid of it.

Having gained access, elements of the vaccine can stay for prolonged periods, perhaps permanently, by incorporating themselves within the genetic material of the cells.

This constant presence and the body's repeated but hopeless attempts to expunge the foreign or, by now,

quasi-foreign presence, can lead to a systematic weakening of the immune system as a whole and thus, greater susceptibility to all manner of ailments.

And so, far from providing protection against acute disease, vaccination can be said to drive the disease deeper into the body's interior and cause the body to harbour the disease chronically.

Among the chronic maladies associated with latent persisting viruses says Moskowitz, are warts, shingles, herpes, Creutzfeldt-Jacob disease, AIDS and benign and malignant tumours."

TAKING THE CREDIT?

Taken from The Times, Tuesday, August 19, 1992.

"There were no child deaths from measles or whooping cough in England and Wales for the first time last year, according to government figures. Record numbers of children were immunised against infectious diseases last year. 92 per cent were vaccinated against measles, mumps and rubella and 90 per cent against whooping cough. Virginia Bottomley, the health secretary, said that the figures were an excellent achievement but that there was no room for complacency until these diseases were eliminated. The haemophilus influenza b (Hib) vaccine will be introduced into the programme from October 1. Hib is the most frequent cause of bacterial meningitis in children under five and kills about 65 people a year in England and Wales".

The above article certainly gives the impression that vaccination takes the credit for almost eliminating measles and whooping cough in England and Wales.

However, if we take a look at two graphs taken from 'The Role of Medicine' by Thomas McKeown (see reading list) showing the number of deaths per million from measles or whooping cough from approximately 1850 to 1970, one would perhaps reach a rather different conclusion on how much vaccination has contributed to the decline of these illnesses.

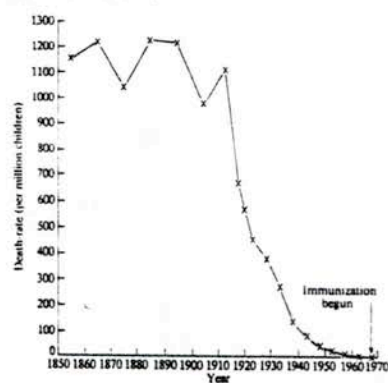


FIGURE 8.14. Measles: death rates of children under 15; England and Wales.



FIGURE 8.12. Whooping cough: death rates of children under 15; England and Wales.

FORTHCOMING TALK

Leatherhead Homoeopathy & Healing Group.

Immunisation and Immunity.

Dr. F Schellander

Wednesday 7th October 1992

At: The Institute, High Street, Leatherhead.

7.30pm for 8pm

Visitors welcome. Admission £1.00

Please let us know of any future talks that would be of interest to other members, so we can pass the details on.

Also, let us know if you are interested in arranging a talk in your area. We are in contact with speakers on the subject, in various parts of the country.

IMMUNISATION - A MOTHER'S PERSONAL VIEW

"I first became interested in the subject of immunisation when I happened to read an article in the Evening Standard last September.

My second daughter, Nancy, was due for her MMR vaccination and so I became deeply concerned when I read about the allegedly potential dangers of vaccinations and I decided to look further into the subject.

At that time I felt very isolated with my 'new findings' and nervous about refusing the MMR vaccination, but I continued to follow my 'gut feeling'.

I began to read as much as I possibly could on the subject and by doing so, my concern and anxiety began to turn to anger. I started to feel very troubled by the notion that, had I been given more unbiased information I would have chosen not to have

vaccinations for my children.

I knew I could not turn back the clocks, but I could perhaps use my anger in a positive way. I decided to try to urge other parents to read more widely on the subject, so at least they would have the opportunity to consider the risks and benefits, and make an 'informed choice.' This is something I felt I had been denied.

After a great deal of letter writing and phone calls, I began to come across other parents who shared the same view. They also felt the need to do something about the lack of information available. So The Informed Parent group was set up.

A year ago, I knew very little on the subject and as I had always believed that vaccinations were a good thing, the decision to have my first child vaccinated was relatively easy.

Also the fact that vaccinations are well promoted and highly regarded by orthodox medicine makes you feel rather heretical when doubts start creeping into your mind.

Many people's reactions are: "Don't tell me ... I'd rather not know," but for me personally I would rather know even if it means that, ultimately, I have taken the responsibility of my child's health into my own hands.

For a while, after becoming more informed, I felt extremely guilty that I had never questioned the procedure before. But why question vaccinations when on the surface, they are presented as extremely safe and effective?

I hope that this new organisation will help more people to become better informed and create more debate on the subject. This may then lead to a reassessment of the current childhood vaccination programmes - in fact, any vaccinations."

Magda Taylor, August 1992.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE GROUP

1. To promote awareness and understanding about immunisation in order to preserve the freedom of an informed choice.
2. To offer support to parents regardless of the decisions they make.
3. To inform parents of the alternatives to vaccinations.
4. To accumulate historical and current information about immunisation and to make it available to members and interested parties.
5. To arrange and facilitate local talks, discussions and seminars on immunisation and preventative medicine for childhood illnesses.
6. To establish a nationwide support network and register (subject to members permission).
7. To publish a newsletter for members.
8. To obtain, collect and receive money and funds by way of contributions, donations, subscriptions, legacies, grants or any other lawful methods; to accept and receive any gift of property and to devote the income, assets or property of the group in or towards fulfilment of the objectives of the group.

Membership Application Form

YES, I WOULD LIKE TO JOIN THE "INFORMED PARENT GROUP"

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Telephone _____

If you do not want your name and address made available to other members, please tick this box

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE

(please tick appropriate box)

Waged £5.00

Students and unwaged £4.00

Organisations £8.00

I enclose cheque / postal order for the sum of

£ _____ (cheques and postal orders made payable to 'The Informed Parent').

Please return this form with your remittance to:

The Informed Parent, 29 Greyhound Road, Sutton,
Surrey SM1 4BY.