Vaccines' Lifesaving Benefits Confirmed Again

By ACSH Staff — November 13, 2007

A new report in today's *Journal of the American Medical Association* documents the profound decline in vaccine-preventable disease and death for those infections with vaccines approved before 1980. The lifesaving effect of vaccines released subsequent to 1980 has also been dramatic, although somewhat less so than the older vaccines. The diseases eliminated -- or nearly eliminated -- include diphtheria, measles, mumps, pertussis (whooping cough), polio, congenital rubella syndrome (German measles), smallpox, and tetanus. The more recent vaccines have led to significant declines in the occurrences of hepatitis A and B, hemophilus influenza type b, invasive pneumococcal disease, and varicella (chicken pox).

The study was done under the supervision of Sandra Roush, MPH, and Trudy Murphy, MD, of the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Disease of the CDC in Atlanta, along with the Vaccine-Preventable Disease Table Working Group, also of the CDC. There was no evaluation included of influenza, given the annual vaccine requirements and the variable nature of the infection from year to year.

The lesson of this study is clear: as the authors state, "Vaccines are among the greatest achievements of biomedical science and public health." Those who continue to promote the myth of vaccine toxicity, including the thoroughly discredited link to autism, should realize that the alarmism and baseless fear they generate cause parents to avoid having their kids vaccinated, and this leads to real preventable disease and death.

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See also: ACSH's full report[3], parents’ guide[4], and brochure[5] on vaccines.

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