

Does vaccination prevent childhood leukemia?

By ACSH Staff — February 3, 2011

A [study](#) ^[1] published in *The Journal of Pediatrics* presents an interesting hypothesis: vaccination may lower a child's likelihood of suffering lymphoblastic leukemia.

This theory was buttressed by epidemiological data from Texas counties during the years 1995-2006. The study authors noted that in counties where children received a vaccine series including the Hepatitis B and polio vaccines, the rates of this form of leukemia were thirty to forty percent lower.

ACSH's Dr. Elizabeth Whelan and Dr. Gilbert Ross caution that the data is correlational. Dr. Ross specifically notes that the researchers did not look at the connection between individual patients and incidence of the disease. "We tend to take the view that drawing any conclusions from studies like this, which purport to correlate county-wide interventions with possibly unrelated outcomes, should be regarded with suspicion," he says.

ACSH's Dr. Josh Bloom, however, thinks this is a fascinating finding given that more and more cancers are being linked to viral infections. "We now know that Hep-B and Hep-C cause liver cancer, HPV causes cervical and oral cancer, HTLV causes lymphoma and T-cell leukemia and HSV-8 is strongly linked to Kaposi's Sarcoma. And I expect this list to grow."

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[1] <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/02/02/us-leukemia-risk-idUSTRE7117IX20110202>