

Link between swine flu vaccine and GB syndrome is weak

By ACSH Staff — March 14, 2013

Vaccinations for the 2009 H1N1 swine flu outbreak saved an estimated 500 lives and may have caused 77 people to develop Guillain-Barre syndrome (GBS) a temporary, but serious paralytic autoimmune disorder, a new study finds.

Researchers led by Dr. Bruce Gellin of the National Vaccine Program Office at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services analyzed a survey of 23 million people in the U.S and found that cases of GBS were about twice as likely to occur in the six weeks following vaccination as they were later on.

According to the study, for every 1 million who received the monovalent H1N1 vaccination, there were an extra 1.6 cases of the syndrome, which occurs when the immune system attacks nerve cells. It should be noted that this increase was found only with this particular vaccine produced specifically in response to the 2009 pandemic not the normal trivalent (three strains) vaccine that is given annually.

Dr. Gellin [told](#) ^[1] My Health News Daily that the study only found an association, and can't prove that the flu vaccine causes Guillain-Barre syndrome. It's possible that the syndrome is more common when flu vaccination peaks, which would affect the results, for example.

None of this has anything to do with the annual flu vaccine, notes ACSH's Dr. Gilbert Ross. And given that the swine flu vaccine prevented an estimated 700,000 to 1.5 million cases of flu and 4,000 to 10,000 hospital admissions, the benefits of the vaccine still greatly outweighed any possible risk. And I strongly doubt that this increase is a real one anyway, since the condition is so rare in both the general population and among those vaccinated.

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