Vaccine side effects Real (occasionally) but nothing to worry about

By ACSH Staff — January 9, 2014

The anti-vaccine crowd perhaps a little discouraged after the complete and thorough debunking of any link between vaccination and autism will probably scream bloody murder. Except, (as always) it will be about nothing. Or in this case, almost nothing.

A study conducted by scientists at the Columbia University Medical Center and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which was published online Jan. 6, 2014, in JAMA Pediatrics concluded that more children, between the ages of 6 and 23 months who were given both the influenza and pneumococcal vaccines during the same visit had a three-fold higher risk of developing a fever than those who got the vaccines during separate visits.

About a third (37.6 percent) had a fever of 100.4o degrees F or higher on the day of or day after vaccination, compared with children who received only the pneumococcal (9.5 percent) or only the influenza (7.5 percent) vaccine.

The study followed 530 children recruited during the 2011-2012 flu season and was conducted by sending a text message to parents asking them to report on the highest fever their children developed following: 1) Both vaccines given together; 2) the pneumococcal vaccine given alone, and 3) the influenza vaccine given alone. By the second day following vaccination there was no difference between the groups.

Lead author Dr. Melissa S. Stockwell, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics and Population at Columbia said, "Parents should be made aware that their child might develop a fever following simultaneous influenza and pneumococcal vaccinations - but that the benefits of these vaccines outweigh the risk of fever and, in most cases, the fever will be brief. For the small group of children who must avoid fever, these findings provide important information for clinicians and parents."

This is something that we at ACSH have been saying for years people do sometimes get mild reactions to vaccines, but the protection against the infectious disease far outweighs the minor risk.