

VACCINATION: A VEX

Dr Jonathan Tobias discusses immunisation, a concept which has been criticised in homoeopathic circles but which has undoubtedly saved millions of young lives. Ultimately, he says, it is the parents who have to take a decision based on available information. Dr Tobias is a Clinical Assistant in the Outpatients Department at the Royal London Homoeopathic Hospital NHS Trust.

All animals have a unique means of survival with the ability of the blood to recognise foreign substances (proteins) and eliminate them. This is maintained by the production of antibodies by certain of their blood cells, often in response to infections. The body thus gains immunity to the infection if it survives.

Immunity to smallpox

This was first observed by Edward Jenner in England at the beginning of the 19th Century. He noticed that milkmaids who had cowpox often developed an immunity to smallpox, a notorious killer in Europe at that time.

By taking pus from blisters on their hands, placing it on the patient's skin and scratching it in, the body produced a similar blister to the milkmaid's cowpox, but the patient would not come down with the dreaded smallpox.

Jenner became world famous with his process of vaccination. Recently, the scourge of smallpox was totally eliminated in the world so that people no longer need to be vaccinated against it.

The transmission of infectious diseases was still a great mystery, until the work of Louis Pasteur in France during the second half of the 19th century.

Bacteria and viruses

About 50 years before that, Samuel Hahnemann postulated a very similar idea with the miasm theory of chronic diseases, but unfortunately had no experimental proof for this.

Bacteria could sometimes be seen under a microscope, with special staining, but a virus, which is far smaller, could only be visualised with an electron microscope, which came

around 1950. A virus is so tiny that it cannot have an independent life outside its host, but is obliged to invade the host's cells and use the host's proteins to replicate itself.

With immunisation, the poisonous proteins of some bacteria are taken, made less "harmful," and injected with various additives. Protection against tetanus, diphtheria and whooping cough (pertussis) is given in this way during the first year of life. An increased concentration of antibodies comes with the second and third injections.

The whooping cough vaccine

There has been considerable controversy in the past regarding the whooping cough injection, resulting in severe cases of brain damage, but this largely appears to have been eliminated. Though there were epidemics of whooping cough every four to six years, I have not heard of one in the past eight years.

I think I would refuse whooping cough immunisation for my child. Drosera can be an effective remedy if the child gets whooping cough in future epidemics.

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Many people believe that diphtheria has been largely eliminated with improved drainage and sewerage of the home and cities.

Whooping cough can be a severe disabling illness, one I have known to result in brain damage for some chil-



dren who have had it severely. Being given a tetanus injection after every minor injury seen at the casualty department is an unfortunate case of OI (over-immunisation) as was once the case with smallpox vaccination. Some patients may have a very strong reaction with long-lasting pain and swelling of the arm. Thuja 200c, twice daily, should relieve this after a few doses.

Homoeopathy and vaccination

There should be no real conflict between immunisation and homoeopathy. Indeed, I understand that Hahnemann expressed some support

AND VITAL QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

FACULTY OF HOMEOPATHY

The faculty recommends vaccinations according to usual guidelines in the absence of medical contra-indications.

for Jenner's work. However, there is an unfortunate tendency to give repeated immunisations when not really necessary.

The smallpox vaccine was said to be effective for only seven years. There might be frequent repetitions, which would obviously not "take" because the person was still immune and the antibodies were able to destroy all of the viruses introduced under the skin with the vaccination needle.

There could be many unpleasant side effects from unnecessary repeat vaccinations, leading to months of low-grade ill-health. Thuja, starting with a low potency, going higher, was found to be effective for this.

Suggested remedy

Today, I often advise mothers to give Thuja 6c the night before the injection, again the next morning, and twice daily for a further three days. This should prevent most side effects from the injections. Unfortunately, it cannot prevent a possible infection at the site of the injections in some cases. Treatment with antibiotics might be appropriate for this.

About 50 years ago paralytic polio was a great problem, with repeated epidemics. The virus was often spread through sewerage, and is seasonal. Not every person who is affected with the virus will develop the paralytic form of polio.

There are three different strains of the polio virus, only one of which will give immunity each time the polio drops are administered. Therefore,

the drops must be given at least three times, better four times, for complete immunity to be achieved.

Meningitis

The new injections for Haemophilus Influenzae (HIB), which can cause severe meningitis in young children, have recently been introduced. People now claim that there is a lower incidence of this form of meningitis.

The killed bacteria protein is given three times by injection in a baby's first year. I am a little sceptical of the benefits of this. The haemophilus bacteria comes from the same group of bacteria as Pertussis (whooping cough). It does not give protection against all forms of meningitis.

The same bacteria can cause ear infections and severe sore throats in infants, but I think the possible disadvantages from this form of immunisation far outweigh the advantage of this injection.

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Protection whilst travelling

Protection for travelling to certain places is essential. Yellow fever on visiting the tropics can be a fatal illness, when caught from a mosquito bite.

There is much controversy surrounding the effectiveness of immunisation against typhoid and cholera. It is far more sensible to ensure that one eats only safely prepared foods and water.

Often when travelling, one comes across a different form of a virus, compared with the virus which the body has become used to at home.

This invariably results in the "trav-

eller's diarrhoea." For this I recommend Arsenicum album 6c after each diarrhoea stool, but if it persists, further advice should be sought.

Hepatitis and tuberculosis

Some protection against infectious hepatitis can be given by an injection with antibodies taken from a person who has previously had this illness. Such passive immunity can last for up to three months when travelling to an area where this form of hepatitis is common.

Tuberculosis, which was a nightmare disease around the world up to 30 or 40 years ago before effective antibiotics were developed, can still be a killer amongst certain communities.

In some parts of this country, a routine BCG injection is given shortly after birth or at school. This vaccination is derived from a bacteria which is very similar to the TB bacteria, but is limited only to the skin, leaving the common BCG scar on the left shoulder.

It certainly does not give a life-long protection, especially if one is exposed to a large number of pulmonary TB germs. The remedy Tub bov 30c given for three doses can sometimes relieve symptoms following the BCG injection.

Immunisation and vaccination

The best way to explain the difference between "immunisation" and "vaccination" is that the former means that killed bacterial products have been introduced into the body by injection. The body produces its own antibodies against that bacteria, and will hopefully have immunity after this.

"Vaccination" means that a live virus or bacteria has been introduced and the body is able to produce its own protection against BCG, Yellow Fever and polio. Viruses can be grown in cell cultures and can be given as a live vaccination.

Measles, mumps and rubella

The relatively new MMR injection which was introduced about eight years ago, contains the viruses of measles, mumps and rubella. Measles can be a very nasty sickness, with some

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prolonged complications which can obviously interfere with a child's education.

Mumps is also an extremely unpleasant childhood illness and may lead to complications such as encephalitis, though this is almost unheard of since the arrival of vaccination.

Rubella (German measles) can also be very unpleasant if it affects the mother whilst she is pregnant, for the baby can develop multiple handicaps. It would be very reassuring if doctors never saw a case of mumps, measles, or the rubella handicaps, with the successful immunisation of every child.

**Homeopathy can
relieve many of the
symptoms of immunisation**

Companies obviously want to promote their products as much as possible. General practitioners are now paid a bonus if there is a high uptake for immunisation by families on their lists.

People who promote immunisation have the concept of "herd immunity." This means that the group of people is protected if all the members of that group are immune and the occasional individual who is not protected will thus gain protection.

This obviously conflicts with homeopathy where the individuality of the patient is of paramount importance. I find it difficult to resolve this conflict. The giving of a nosode is believed to offer some protection, but this has not been proven satisfactorily.

I think it is best if parents can make their own informed decision regarding immunisation for their child. Homeopathy can relieve many of the symptoms from immunisation.

I would certainly think that the advantage of the polio vaccination is advisable for every child, as is the MMR injection, but would prefer to rely on effective homeopathic treatments in most other cases.



A winning remedy

The Royal Family, as most people know, are keen supporters of homeopathy. This brings to mind a story about King George VI who, it was reputed, was quite knowledgeable about homeopathy. The King named one of his racehorses "Hypericum" which, incidentally, was a Derby winner.

When asked why he had named it so, he replied, "Because its nerves are always in a fret."

Homeopathically, Hypericum is used as a remedy for damaged and injured nerves.

US campaigners win through

After a strong fight by supporters of alternative care, the Carolina States Medical Practices Act, which denied patients access to non-prevailing therapies such as homeopathy, has been amended.

For seven years Dr George Guess fought the Board of Medical Examiners' efforts to revoke his medical licence and even moved to the neighbouring state of Virginia in order to practise homeopathy. Now, at last, he is free to practise it in North Carolina.

Victorious Victoria

London homeopath Dr Victoria Blackstone has been honoured by America's Board of Homeopathic Examiners (NBHE) by gaining their first award in the category of Posology.

"Your article will be a lasting example of professional excellence in presenting homeopathic material," said the organisation. "The NBHE is in your debt for your superior presentation."

The article on "single or multiple medicine prescribing" was submitted by Dr Peter Fisher, editor of the "British Homeopathic Journal," and a consultant at the Royal London Homeopathic Hospital.

They should know...

Quote from the "Newsletter" of the Enfield and District branch of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain:

"Because of concern about the side effects of the drugs used in conventional medicine, or in the hope of finding more effective treatment for chronic incurable conditions, many people are turning to various branches of alternative medicine, including homeopathy."

Well they should know, shouldn't they? Who better than pharmacists to appreciate the side effects of drugs, except possibly the patients using them...

'Archer' aims for success

"The Archers" is among Radio Four's longest and most popular radio programmes. Brian Aldridge, one of the leading characters, is played by Charles Collingwood, a Vice-President of The Homeopathic Society and member of the Homeopathic Trust.

"Book of the Archers," of which Charles is a co-author, was recently published.

We wish him – and it – much success, and hope that the "Book of the Archers" will be successful and sell as many copies as the other Archer (Jeffrey).

What an advantage!

Martina Navratilova, one of the greats of tennis, is, I am reliably informed, a keen supporter of homeopathy, and has a homeopathic doctor.

On the right track

Ipecacuanha is widely used as an expectorant in patent cough mixtures. The plant is to be found in the Amazon forests of South America, where it was given its name by the Indians who called it Ipe-cac-u-an-lia. Translated this means "plant that grows by the side of the track that makes you sick."

In homeopathy it is known for its efficacy in conditions of violent retching and nausea.

Of course, a fundamental law of homeopathy is that what can cause can also cure.