

A shot in the dark?

The "vaccinate or die" philosophy preached by multinational drug companies and practised with almost religious zeal by orthodox...

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The "vaccinate or die" philosophy preached by multinational drug companies and practised with almost religious zeal by orthodox medical practitioners is one I have had fundamental reservations about for many years. The atmosphere of fear and intimidation generated by this lobby has stifled any debate on the less publicised but ever-present downside to vaccination since mass inoculation was introduced more than 50 years ago.

On the birth of our daughter last November, we were not prepared to accept the virtually unchallenged doctrine that implied that parents who did not vaccinate their children were taking an unnecessary gamble with their child's future health - or even the child's life.

I felt there had to be a more balanced approach to the thinking in regard to this issue, and some months after our baby was born, I attended a compelling lecture given by Dr Viera Scheibner on the issue.

Dr Scheibner, a retired principal research scientist with a PhD in natural sciences now living in Australia, has published a book entitled *Vaccination: The Medical Assault on The Immune System*. The book is a summary of the results of orthodox medical research into vaccinations and their effects.

Her interest in the negative aspects of vaccination came about when she and her late husband Leif Karlsson, a biomedical electronics engineer specialising in patient-monitoring systems, developed Cot watch, a breathing monitor for babies thought to be at risk from "cot death" (sudden infant death syndrome). The apparatus showed alarming results when the babies it was monitoring were exposed to a host of stressful events, vaccination being the most prominent.

Scheibner then began to study how vaccination affected babies' breathing patterns. These patterns were presenting clearly in computer print-outs, and she began to suspect a link between vaccinations and cot deaths. She proceeded to see if such a link could be verified.

She discovered that during certain vaccine trials many children contracted the diseases against which they were being vaccinated - often within days of being injected. Babies who died during vaccination trials were usually excluded from evaluation.

Serious side effects, especially of a neurological nature, were considered "coincidental". She also discovered that it was considered purely "coincidental" that most cot deaths happened between the age of two to six months - which is when most vaccinations are administered.

Yet most studies of the cot death phenomenon and infantile convulsions do not include information on vaccinations. The few publications which do mention both conclude that there is no causal relationship between the two.

Much about the dangers and apparent ineffectiveness of vaccination programmes had been published in reputable medical journals but, possibly fearing a public outcry, these reports had been censored for debate in the wider public arena, according to Dr Scheibner.

The example of the infamous polio epidemic of the late 1940s which carried on throughout the 1950s is used to influence parents to vaccinate their children. Scheibner is convinced that polio is a man-made virus and

that vaccines have contributed to its growth - rather than its eradication. She dedicates more than 40 pages of her book to reports which totally discredit the effectiveness of polio vaccines.

Japan raised the minimum vaccination age to two years in 1975. This, says Scheibner, was followed by the virtual disappearance of cot death and infantile convulsions. Since the 1980s, Japan has allowed vaccination of three-month-old and older babies, and the incidence of cot death has increased. Sweden stopped vaccinating against whooping cough in 1979 due to the ineffectiveness of the whole-cell vaccine and its adverse effects, which far exceeded the adverse effects of the whooping cough illness. Here in Ireland we have been kept largely ignorant about any controversy at all on these issues. It has been documented that the vaccine against tuberculosis (which ravaged this country 50 years ago) had no impact whatsoever on the incidence of the disease, which primarily flourished in conditions of malnutrition and overcrowding. Improved nutrition and above all better sanitation and clean drinking water are, according to Scheibner, the best way to reduce mortality from infectious diseases.

The main plank of Scheibner thesis (after studying some 30,000 pages of medical papers) is that there is no evidence that vaccines are effective. On the contrary, she believes that vaccines are highly noxious. Most contain formaldehyde, aluminium phosphate, thiomersal (mercury compound) and foreign proteins (antigens). Contaminating animal proteins and viruses from tissue are used as a growth medium on which to culture the viral and bacterial components of the vaccines. She maintains that none of these substances should ever be injected into humans. Vaccines injected directly into the bloodstream are allowed direct access to the major immune organs and tissues, bypassing the most instrumental organs in the natural immunological process, and there is a constant battle to expel these foreign substances - which weakens the immune system.

THE body has its own natural mechanisms to create immunity to diseases. The diseases themselves, when left alone, are the priming and challenging mechanisms of the maturation process of the immune system. Pharmaceutical companies and orthodox medical practitioners will continue to proffer the argument that vaccines have all but eradicated killer diseases such as polio, measles, TB, diphtheria etc. on a global scale. However, Scheibner is angry at what she calls "the fanaticism fed by ignorance, irrational fear of illness and greed which are the motivating forces behind the ritual of vaccination". She believes that vaccination programmes have caused more suffering and death than any other human activity in the history of medical intervention.

We have decided not to get our daughter vaccinated.

Philip Boxberger contracted polio during the 1950s epidemic. He is a freelance journalist and is active in disability rights issues

The inaugural meeting of the Parents Vaccination Network is on Monday, November 10th, at 7 p.m. in Sachs Hotel, Dublin. Contact Anne Morris Dunne on 01-832 7287