



Letter to the editor: The Pundit Speaks
By Randolph M. Howes, M.D., Ph.D.
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"Kids, Flu Vaccines and Cholesterol Drugs"

As a follow up, I will discuss the latest developments concerning the flu vaccines and cholesterol medications. First, we are aware of the colossal waste of tax payer's money for unused flu vaccines, while the drug companies got their money up front. Additionally, children receive roughly 30 plus vaccination doses by school age and their safety is the source of heated debates involving associations with paralyzing diseases, altered brain development and autism. Issues of concern revolve around the mercury preservative, thimerosal and the unknown effects of "weakened viruses." Aggressive childhood vaccination programs should always be thoroughly evaluated and debated by competent doctors and scientists, before being administered to the public. A new report from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices reported that doctors should avoid using the CSL Biotherapies (CLS) vaccine in children ages 6 months through 8 years because of convulsions and fever in kids who got the shot in Australia and New Zealand. CSL is an Australian company and one of five manufacturers supplying the U.S. this past fall but it only accounts for a small portion of the 170 million doses. Of great concern to me is the "unexplained" higher rate of fevers and related seizures seen in young children who got the vaccine. In fact, Australian investigators have been unable to find anything in the CSL vaccine that might explain why it would cause more fevers and convulsions in children. To me, this is a huge red flag. Next, is the issue of putting large sections of the healthy population on cholesterol medications. The European Union has approved a new chewable form of cholesterol blockbuster Lipitor for children 10 and up with high levels of bad cholesterol and triglycerides. Please remember the words of experts, Drs. Steve Nissen and Roger Blumenthal, "Although the drugs have been shown to reduce cholesterol, their manufacturers acknowledge that they've never been shown to prevent heart attacks or other life-threatening events." They have now pushed the market to include kids. Dr. Lisa Schwartz of the Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice, put it this way: "We just don't know what the balance of benefits and harms are for people who are going to take this (statin drugs) for a lifetime."

In the America that I love, it is most unfortunate that we can not put our full trust in all current flu vaccines and we appear to be performing after-market testing unwittingly on our children. Reports of this nature undermine our faith in our government, the drug companies and the FDA. No child should ever serve as a lab rat. One problem with Big Pharma is that it is always looking for the next block-buster drug, which can be sold to everyone, everyday, for the rest of the patient's life.

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