

Pilot Comparative Study on the Health of Vaccinated and Unvaccinated 6-12 Year Old US Children

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Pilot comparative study on the health of vaccinated and unvaccinated 6- to 12-year-old U.S. children

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Abstract

Vaccinations have prevented millions of infectious illnesses, hospitalizations and deaths among U.S. children, yet the long-term health outcomes of the vaccination schedule remains uncertain. Studies have been recommended by the U.S. Institute of Medicine to address this question. This study aimed 1) to compare vaccinated and unvaccinated children on a broad range of health outcomes, and 2) to determine whether an association found between vaccination and neurodevelopmental disorders (NDD), if any, remained significant after adjustment for other measured factors. A cross-sectional study of mothers of children educated at home was carried out in collaboration with homeschool organizations in four U.S. states: Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Oregon. Mothers were asked to complete an anonymous online questionnaire on their 6- to 12-year-old biological children with respect to pregnancy-related factors, birth history, vaccinations, physician-diagnosed illnesses, medications used, and health services. NDD, a derived diagnostic measure, was defined as having one or more of the following three closely-related diagnoses: a learning disability, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, and Autism Spectrum Disorder. A convenience sample of 666 children was obtained, of which 261 (39%) were unvaccinated. The vaccinated were less likely than the unvaccinated to have been diagnosed with chickenpox and pertussis, but more likely to have been diagnosed with pneumonia, otitis media, allergies and NDD. After adjustment, vaccination, male gender, and preterm birth remained significantly associated with NDD. However, in a final adjusted model with interaction, vaccination but not preterm birth remained associated with NDD, while the interaction of preterm birth and vaccination was associated with a 6.6-fold increased odds of NDD (95% CI: 2.8, 15.5). In conclusion, vaccinated homeschool children were found to have a higher rate of allergies and NDD than unvaccinated homeschool children. While vaccination remained significantly associated with NDD after controlling for other factors, preterm birth coupled with vaccination was associated with an apparent synergistic increase in the odds of NDD. Further research involving larger, independent samples and stronger research designs is needed to verify and understand these unexpected findings in order to optimize the impact of vaccines on children's health.

Important note from the editors. The vax/unvax study is now-officially published in a peer reviewed journal. The full text is available on line [HERE](#) at the [Journal of Translational Science](#).

The .pdf is [HERE](#): Mawson et al 2017 vax-unvax Jnl Translational Science

By Mark Blaxill

In a development that autism parents have long anticipated, the first-ever, peer-reviewed study comparing total health outcomes in vaccinated and unvaccinated children was released on line yesterday. According to sources close to the project, the study had been reviewed and accepted by two different journals, both of which pulled back on their approval once the

political implications of the findings became clear. That's largely because, as parents have long expected, the rate of autism is significantly higher in the vaccinated group, a finding that could shake vaccine safety claims just as the first president who has ever stated a belief in a link between vaccines and autism has taken office.

Working in partnership with the National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI), Dr. Anthony Mawson led a research team that investigated the relationship between vaccination exposures and a range of over 40 acute and chronic illnesses in home schooled children, a population chosen for its high proportion of unvaccinated children. Surveying families in four states--Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Oregon—the study (officially titled *Vaccination and Health Outcomes: A Survey of 6- to 12-year-old Vaccinated and Unvaccinated Children based on Mothers' Reports*), reported a number of startling findings.

Vaccinated children were significantly more likely than the unvaccinated to have been diagnosed with a neurodevelopmental disorder: most notably, the risk of being affected by an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) was 4.7 fold higher in vaccinated children; as well, ADHD risk was 4.7 fold higher and learning disability risk was 3.7 fold higher. Overall, the vaccinated children in the study were 3.7 times more likely to have been diagnosed with some kind of neurodevelopmental disorder.

Vaccinated children were also significantly more likely to be diagnosed with an immune-related disorder. The risk of allergic rhinitis (commonly known as hay fever) was over 30 times higher in vaccinated children, while the risk of other allergies was increased 3.9 fold and the eczema risk was increased 2.4 fold.

With respect to acute illness and infectious disease the outcomes were in some respects surprising. As might be expected, unvaccinated children were significantly (4-10 times) more likely to have come down with chicken pox, rubella or pertussis. Perhaps unexpectedly, the unvaccinated children were

less likely to suffer from otitis media and pneumonia: vaccinated children had 3.8 times greater odds of a middle ear infection and 5.9 times greater odds of a bout with pneumonia.

The study was based on a survey with participants recruited in a process led by NHERI and coordinated through 84 state and local homeschool groups. The survey itself was, according to the authors, “nonbiased and neutrally worded.”

These findings in a study population of 666 children, 261 of whom (39%) were unvaccinated, are sure to stir controversy, in part because it is the first of its kind. The scientific literature on the long-term effects of the vaccination program is virtually silent. Most studies on the safety of vaccines only consider immediate or short-term effects. There was no obvious explanation for the differences in health outcomes observed between the vaccinated and unvaccinated groups of children other than vaccination itself.

The finding that vaccination is a significant risk for autism is the most explosive finding in the paper. For well over a decade, parents concerned that vaccines were involved in autism’s sharp rise have been calling for what has long been labelled the “vax/unvax” study. Public health officials such as Paul Offit have resisted these calls with claims that a comparative study of autism risk and other health outcomes in unvaccinated and vaccinated children would be *retrospectively impossible* and *prospectively unethical*.

Despite opposition from those like Offit, attempts to launch a formal vax/unvax study have been made for many years. In 2006, Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney (D, NY) authored what is now called Vaccine Safety Study Act. Said Maloney to the opponents, “Maybe someone in the medical establishment will show me why this study is a bad idea, but they haven't done it yet.” In 2007, Generation Rescue (one of the Mawson study’s sponsors) retained a market research firm to undertake a similar survey (it is available on line and had similar findings but was never published in a scientific journal).

Less formal surveys focused on whether or not autism was present in the unvaccinated have also been undertaken in unusual populations, including the Amish and the patients of alternative health practitioners. Age of Autism founder Dan Olmsted investigated autism in the Amish, who vaccinate less frequently. Autism is rare among the Amish and the only autistic Amish children we discovered were also vaccinated. (Others reported cases in Amish children with birth defects, but not “idiopathic autism,” the kind that occurs in otherwise typical children who are the heart of the current epidemic). The late Mayer Eisenstein reported in his HomeFirst practice in Chicago that he delivered more than 15,000 babies at home, and thousands of them were never vaccinated. Of these unvaccinated children, none had autism.

The link between autism and vaccination became a hot topic in this year’s presidential election. Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton once tweeted ““The science is clear: The earth is round, the sky is blue, and #vaccineswork. Let's protect all our kids. #GrandmothersKnowBest.” In contrast, President Donald Trump has long been outspoken about the likely connection between vaccines and autism. As early as 2007, Trump remarked, “When I was growing up, autism wasn't really a factor. And now all of a sudden, it's an epidemic. Everybody has their theory, and my theory is the shots. They're getting these massive injections at one time. I think it's the vaccinations.”

In the absence of any published evidence on the question, the call for a vax/unvax study has become a rallying cry for autism advocates. Now it appears, the results confirm what many have long suspected. These findings, especially the significant link between autism risk and vaccination, are certain to increase pressure on public health officials inside and outside the government to acknowledge the legitimacy of a concern they have long dismissed.

Like any study, this one is open to critique. One will be its relatively small sample size, relatively high ASD rate (3.3% overall as compared to 2.24% in the closest comparable CDC study) as well as the funding sources. Most

studies that have found no link between autism and vaccination have been pharma or government funded, and the media has not considered that significant enough to mention. Nonetheless, expect a hue and cry that money for this study came in part from sources concerned about a possible vaccine-autism link.

Note: Here is the funding statement from the leaked paper. “This study was supported by grants from Generation Rescue, Inc., and the Children’s Medical Safety Research Institute, charitable organizations that support research on children’s health and vaccine safety. The funders had no role or influence on the design and conduct of the research or the preparation of reports.” Generation Rescue is a Founding National Sponsor of Age of Autism