

## **NEWS FROM JAPAN**

*Earlier this year a two-day conference was held in Naples, Italy (31st May-1st June 1997) entitled "Should vaccinations be compulsory or free choice?" Doctors from various areas of the world were invited to present the situation in their country and also to highlight problems surrounding some of the vaccines.*

*I (Informed Parent) recently received a copy of the presentation made by Dr Yamamoto entitled 'Why Japanese Government had to cease compulsory vaccinations.' A viewpoint from a pediatrician. Reproduced here are some the points he presented (The English translation is reasonably clear.)*

### **INFLUENZA IN JAPAN**

Mass influenza vaccination programmes for school aged children had been started in 1960, and about 3 million children were vaccinated. In 1976, the compulsory vaccination system had been introduced and 17 million children from primary to high school had to be vaccinated twice annually. This was a unique vaccination programme in the world, which the government believed would avoid the social influenza epidemics. This was a wrong hypothesis which was not verified for a long time.

Since the 80s the vaccination uptake was constant at about 60% every year but the incidence rate per 100,000 changed from 5 to 60 without concern to the vaccination rate. Since 1989 the vaccination uptake decreased rapidly to 20%, but the incidence rate did not increase.

#### ***Influenza incidence rate between non-vaccinated city and neighbouring vaccinated cities -***

##### ***1984***

City A ceased compulsory Influenza vaccination in 1980.

City B to D continued compulsory vaccinations.

City A - The number of school children were about 25,000 City B - Number of school children were about 21,000. Statistically, they were almost the same groups.

The results

City A - Vaccination uptake below

1%. Influenza incidence 43%

City B - Vaccination uptake 90%

Influenza incidence 40%

City C - Vaccination uptake 77%

Influenza incidence 43%

City D - Vaccination uptake 76%

Influenza incidence 52% A similar study was documented in 1985 with similar results. It was an important epidemiologic study for compulsory influenza vaccination programme to be ceased.

## **ADVERSE REACTIONS TO INFLUENZA VACCINATION**

A **mass study of adverse reactions** against the influenza vaccine was conducted in 1987 involving about 400,000 children.

The total adverse reaction rate was 254.3 per million. (10 per million children had complained of neurological symptoms.)

This study was revealing, since from 1971 the government had changed the flu vaccine from a whole body type to a split particle type announcing that adverse reactions were almost nothing with the new one. The previous type, used in the 1960s had resulted in between 5-9 deaths occurring every year.

In 1987 the government changed the vaccine from compulsory to free choice.

From 1972 to 1979, a total number of 142 children and families sued the government for damages. The total number of deaths were 50, severe developmental retardation were 65, and intractable epilepsy were 35.

In 1992, the government lost the case in the court after about 20 years of legal proceedings.

[\[Home\]](#) [\[Flu vaccines\]](#)