



Written by [Sam Blumenfeld](#) on February 12, 2015

## Vaccinations and Parental Rights

Why are so many well-educated parents refusing to have their infants immunized against Hepatitis B, measles, mumps, and rubella (M.M.R.), as well as diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (DTP)? The reason can be summed up in one word: autism. Autism used to be a very rare disease, but today 1 in 85 boys becomes autistic.

What is the cause of this epidemic in autism? The medical profession is very vague about it. They simply don't know the cause, but they are adamant that it has nothing to do with inoculations. However many parents suspect that indeed it may have something to do with the 18 inoculations containing 24 vaccines against nine diseases given to children in their first six months of life.



David Kirby, author of the 2005 book, *Evidence of Harm: Mercury in Vaccines and the Autism Epidemic*, wrote in the Huffington Post:

I have been speaking to young parents in my neighborhood of Park Slope, Brooklyn lately about vaccines and autism.... These are highly educated, affluent and politically progressive people — doctors, lawyers, entrepreneurs, writers and other successful professionals. And [like half of the American population](#) in one poll, many of my neighbors (though certainly not all) say that there is, or may be, an association between autism and the current U.S. vaccine schedule.

It's a fact that many children with ASD [autism spectrum disorder] regressed following normal development just as they were receiving multiple vaccines at regular doctor visits. Health officials say the timing is entirely coincidental. Regression usually occurs between 12 and 24 months, though [one study found](#) that some children show signs of autism as early as six months, but never before that age. By six months of age, [most U.S. children have received about 18 inoculations](#) containing 24 vaccines against nine diseases. Over the next two years or so, they will receive another nine shots containing 14 vaccines against 12 diseases.

In many cases, parents report that the child had an abnormal reaction after being vaccinated (seizures, spiking-fevers, diarrhea, lethargy, high-pitched screaming and/or other symptoms).

Some years ago I was asked by a parent in Bedford, Massachusetts, to tutor a 13-year-old girl with a severe learning disability. They were convinced that their daughter's brain had been seriously impaired by the immunization shots she had been given as an infant. After months of working with this child, I concluded that she was basically uneducable, that whatever harm had been done to her brain had severely damaged her cognitive ability. Her parents were part of a growing group of parents who had suffered similar experiences with their children. They were trying to get compensation from the government.



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When you understand the suffering of these parents and children you can understand why there is resistance against the wholesale inoculation of infants. Of course, the current outbreak of measles has been used by the press to criticize the resisters who are now being blamed for the return of measles.

In a recent *New York Times* article, “The Dangers of Vaccine Denial,” Nicholas Kristof writes:

In a few backward parts of the world, extremists resist universal childhood vaccinations. The Taliban in tribal areas of Pakistan. Boko Haram militants in Northern Nigeria. Oh, yes, one more: Some politicians in the United States.

Senator Rand Paul — a doctor! — told CNBC that he had delayed his own children’s immunizations and cited “many tragic cases of walking, talking, normal children who wound up with profound mental disorders after vaccines.”

After an uproar, Paul walked back his remarks and tweeted a photo of himself getting a Hepatitis A vaccination. After that irresponsible scaremongering, I’d say he deserves to get shots daily for a decade. With very long needles.

Irresponsible scaremongering or judicious caution? What about parents’ rights to guard their children against devastating mental impairment? Kristof writes:

Refusing to vaccinate your children is not “personal choice” but public irresponsibility....  
Vaccination isn’t a private choice but a civic obligation.

The *Wall Street Journal* editorialist accused Senator Paul of “broadcasting misinformation.” Yet the same editorial admitted that:

Vaccines do have side effects, most of them minor. In rare cases they can lead to deafness, seizures, comas or brain damage. As the Center for Disease Control points out, these outcomes are “so rare that it is hard to tell whether they are caused by the vaccine.”

So what is a parent to do? Are they no longer allowed to use their protective instincts to guard their children from possible harm? If all of those children who were immunized don’t have to worry, why is not getting one “public irresponsibility”?

If parents think that getting measles is a lot better than acquiring a lifelong mental disorder, they should be able to make that choice, especially for diseases that aren’t generally deadly.

Until the medical profession can tell us what causes autism, newspaper columnists and editorialists should refrain from ridiculing parents and doctors who are concerned about their children’s well being and happiness. The pharmaceutical industry has made its mistakes, as with Thalidomide, for example, so we know that there is no such thing as perfection in these endeavors. Errors were made, as the saying goes. A little more tolerance is called for.



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