

**PRESS RELEASE**  
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## **HPV vaccine consent is uninformed in the UK**

*Alliance for Natural Health draws attention to gaping holes in consent process*

The Alliance for Natural Health (ANH) International has today issued a cross-party request to MPs to investigate the information made available to parents, guardians and children when consent is requested for HPV vaccination.

Presently all 12- to 13-year-old girls in the UK are offered the HPV vaccine as part of the NHS childhood vaccination programme. Uptake in different local authorities varies from 47% to 94%. ANH has identified key information that is not provided in the consent forms and accompanying leaflet and letter and believes omission of this and related information could mislead parents, guardians or recipients of the HPV vaccine. It also has found that school nurses and local authority contact points are not sufficiently educated or informed about relevant issues to be of assistance to the public in making a decision to vaccinate or otherwise.

ANH founder, executive and scientific director, Rob Verkerk PhD, published a blog earlier this week on his organisation's website that spelt out his family's reasons for not providing consent.

Dr Verkerk said, *"Years of work in this area came to the fore this week when one of my daughters – in Year 8 – brought back the consent forms for HPV vaccination. It was a potent reminder, on my doorstep, of what is so wrong with the so-called informed consent process offered by the NHS."*

*School nurses, local authority helplines and even GPs are unprepared for the kind of questions an informed public has the right to be given. That includes providing information about safety, side effects and long-term effectiveness. Without this information, there can be no proper informed consent and whether a child is viewed as being Gillick competent or not, it is irrelevant."*

The ANH, an internationally active research, education and campaign group working in the field of healthcare sustainability, has identified several areas of missing or misinformation. These include:

- The HPV vaccine is claimed to be both safe and effective, when there have been a greater number of adverse events linked to the vaccine and recorded by the MHRA than with any other previous vaccine and the long-term effectiveness cannot be verified for many years
- Any legal interpretation of informed consent requires that alternatives to the proposed treatment are offered, yet measures that help support a child's immunity

or reduce the risk of transmission of high-risk HPV strains and other sexually transmitted infections is not offered as an option.

- While the consent form requests that “any side effects following the HPV vaccination should be reported to the school nurse or your GP”, school nurses and GPs have been found to dismiss side effects such as chronic pain syndrome, malaise and postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome (POTS) as irrelevant.
- When local authority helplines were contacted, none were able to identify the exact vaccine that was being given (e.g., quadrivalent Gardasil or Gardasil9) with one NHS helpline telling the enquirer to contact the British Medical Association.
- The public is being incorrectly told that the HPV vaccine is effective at protecting against cervical cancer when in fact this is an assumption based only on immunogenicity (persistence of antibody response).
- Data on safety and efficacy derived from the original bivalent vaccines is being assumed to be equally relevant to current vaccines that target 4 or 9 HPV types. Studies have shown that immunogenicity of quadrivalent vaccine might persist for just half of the period shown for bivalent vaccines (i.e. 4 years, as against 8 years).
- The smallprint in the patient information leaflet, that will rarely be consulted by consenting adults or children, indicates that the vaccine active ingredient is made using “DNA recombinant technology” which is better understood by the public as “genetic engineering” or GM. If present laws require GM foods to be labelled as such, should this not also be required of medicines?
- Accumulation of high HPV loads in adolescent girls thought be linked to a high risk of cervical and other cancers in later life occur largely through sexual transmission. Yet there is no concurrent effort to help educate children to avoid unprotected sex, a preventative strategy with no side effects.
- Information provided to consenting parents or guardians in the UK was found to be considerably more limited to those in the USA.

The ANH will be working with MPs in the UK with a view to improving the amount, quality and relevance of information to parents, guardians and children being targeted for the HPV vaccine.

ENDS.

**CONTACT**

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## **EDITOR'S NOTES**

For further information, refer to Robert Verkerk's article, "HPV vaccine — the risk of uninformed consent", dated 12 July 2017 [<http://anhinternational.org/2017/07/12/hpv-vaccine-risk-uninformed-consent>].

## **ABOUT ALLIANCE FOR NATURAL HEALTH INTERNATIONAL**

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The Alliance for Natural Health International is an independent, non-governmental organisation established in 2002 that promotes and protects natural, sustainable and bio-compatible approaches to healthcare and disease prevention. Our approach is based on 'good science' and 'good law' and our core activities cover research, education and awareness-raising, legal and advocacy.

ANH-Intl's quest to help more people 'love nature, live naturally' means we engage with a broad range of issues relating to health and disease prevention, especially those involving dietary and lifestyle modification. It is our position that our species is more successful when we choose to work with nature, rather than against it. Accordingly, we are passionate about increasing adoption of scientifically validated, natural and sustainable approaches to healthcare and disease prevention, taking into account cultural needs and individual requirements. The threat of uncertainty, as well as regulatory and others pressures, including from large food and pharmaceutical lobbies, continue to limit freedom of choice in the field of natural health. At ANH, we strive to protect these freedoms along with individual empowerment and engagement.

ANH-Intl was founded by Robert Verkerk PhD, an internationally acclaimed expert in agricultural and health sustainability. Our international office is based in Dorking, UK, while our US base ([www.anh-usa.org](http://www.anh-usa.org)) operates out of Atlanta, GA. We collaborate with a diverse cross-section of interests, including scientists, lawyers, medical doctors, other health professionals, politicians, companies and, above all, consumers.