



# The Immune Response

June 2001

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**CSL**

Vaccines

Please copy and distribute to all immunisation providers in your practice or health centre. Thank you.

## A Moscow influenza virus threatens Australia

We have been advised that the A Moscow and A New Caledonia strain of influenza has reached New Zealand and increased the rate of influenza infection ten times above usual levels. Both strains are included in the current influenza vaccine.

Flu vaccination should be encouraged, especially to all those at greatest risk. Usually transfer of such diseases from New Zealand to Australia is about 3 to 4 weeks. CSL recommends that its flu vaccine reaches full potential two weeks post injection.

## New Boostrix vaccine

A vaccine called Boostrix is now available for older children and adults. It is a diphtheria/tetanus/acellular pertussis vaccine, similar to the paediatric DTPa. It has been licensed for children and adults older than 10 years.

The Public Health Unit recently sent out a media release about it and suggested it be given to 15 year old children in place of the ADT. It is only available on prescription at the current time and costs around \$40.

The outbreak of pertussis continues in the

Northern Rivers area, with many young people aged 12 - 18 being infected.

Contraindications are the same as DTPa - acute febrile illness, previous encephalopathy with pertussis vaccine, previous thrombocytopenia, neurological complications with diphtheria, tetanus vaccine.

Adverse reactions are similar to DTPa.

The immune response for the pertussis component in trials is said to be between 92.1% - 100% depending on previous immunisation with pertussis containing vaccines.

## Vax rates improve

Northern Rivers

This quarter's top five:

**1st:** Park Mall Medical Centre, Ballina

**2nd:** Dr Marlene Pacey, Ballina

**3rd:** Clarence Medical Centre, Maclean

**4th:** Dr Vivek Das, Kyogle

**5th:** GMC, Goonellabah

These figures reflect the work done in the surgeries for the year ending November 2000.

The immunisation rate for the region is 77.7%. Although this is low, we have moved up the divisional ranks from 117 to 116/123. We really can get a much higher percentage as it doesn't realistically reflect the number of children fully vaccinated. Our data cleaning in the region needs to be improved. If you need help give me a call. I'm still mak-

ing my way around the region and will eventually get to everyone.

~ Gae McDonald

NRDGP, (02) 6622 4453

Tweed Valley

The division achieved a 1.2% rise in the overall immunisation rate in the last quarter. This is the highest rise in NSW. Our overall rate is 82%, up from 62.5% in May 1998. Let's keep it up.

The division has contracted Chris Liu, an experienced practice nurse and Gold Coast DGP immunisation project officer to look at ACIR data correction. If you would like Chris to visit your practice or you would like further information about the program, please contact me.

~ Cheryl Colley

TVDGP, (02) 6672 5158

## BRIEFS

### Pneumococcal vaccine

Often we overlook pneumococcal pneumonia as a serious disease. When assessing our immunisation rates we forget about strengthening our efforts to immunise older members of the community.

Information provided by CSL shows just how insidious the disease is and how easy it is to reduce the potentially devastating effects of pneumococcal infections.

In Australia, pneumococcal disease causes more deaths than all other vaccine preventable diseases combined.

There are about 3,500 hospital admissions for pneumococcal disease and 400 deaths each year in Australia.

Please consider talking to your older patients, immunosuppressed, smokers and those with chronic respiratory disease.

For a limited time CSL is offering to pay for postage for recall of your patients who fall into any of these categories. Sample letters can be found on the latest version of Medical Director (August) and can be downloaded from their website. Or contact Jackie from CSL 0401 716 027.

### MMR 18-30 campaign to start in late July

Please order extra MMR vaccine to accommodate the extra demand that the media campaign will generate from July.

### GPII extended

The Federal Health Minister has approved the continuation of the GPII scheme for a further two-year period within defined funding constraints, with a review in June 2003. The scheme will continue with its existing components funded at current rates until the end of December 2001.

### ACIR 020A reports

Some practices are not receiving their ACIR 020A reports. If your report does not arrive at the practice every three months (June, September, December and March) please call the ACIR help line 1800 653 809.