



A profile of the Australian Vaccination Network 2012

A report compiled on behalf of the AVN by Trevor Wilson

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2. Attitudes to vaccination
3. Adverse reactions to vaccination
4. Long term effects of vaccination

Executive summary

The common perception is that vaccines have been largely responsible for the declines last century in the morbidity and mortality from a whole range of common diseases. Both the government and the medical profession aggressively promote vaccination of babies from birth. A number of groups have questioned the conventional wisdom in recent years. This has occurred not only in Australia but also in other countries that promote mass vaccination programs. The Australian Vaccination Network (AVN) was formed in 1994 by a group of concerned parents, health professionals and others. This report contains the results of an on-line membership survey carried out in 2012. Six hundred and forty questionnaires were returned from a membership of around 2,000.

Characteristics of members

The majority of respondents were female (80%). Couple or single parent families with children accounted for 82% of all families represented. The other 18% included people, many of them parents with children that had left home, together with some single and divorced people. The average age of respondents was 46 years, with a range from 23 to 90 years. Around two thirds of all respondents were older than 40 years. Two or more adults took an interest in the vaccination issue in four out of five households.

Overall, the education level of respondents was high. Over 80% had completed some training since completing high school, and 56% were trained to bachelor degree level or above. Eighty five percent listed their occupation to indicate where they were currently working or had worked in the past. Fifty-one percent were in professional occupations, with professionals in the health area making up 29% of the total. These were mostly chiropractors, osteopaths, complementary health providers, nurses and midwives. School teachers and other educational professionals also made up a large group (10%). Another 12% were other professionals in a variety of occupations.

Involvement in the vaccination issue

Most indicated that there were a number of reasons why they joined the AVN. The main reasons were to support the group and be involved (83% of all respondents), and to get information (83%). The threat of compulsory vaccination was a factor for 72%. And 17% said they were members because of an adverse reaction to a vaccine, and 17% because of a long term effect. Most respondents had taken the initiative to access a wide range of sources of information on vaccination. For example, 80% said they had used five or more of the 10 sources of information listed on the questionnaire. Natural health magazines, AVN information, the internet, books and talking to complementary health providers were all used by more than 70%.

Attitudes to vaccination

Respondents overwhelmingly had negative attitudes to childhood vaccination. This was highlighted by their levels of agreement to 18 statements contained in a Likert attitude scale. A majority, (85%), had become less positive to the practice of vaccination at some point in their past. For over half of these people, this had been more than 10 years ago. For many, there was a particular event that set them on the path to researching the issue. The major events listed were: concern for doing the best for their family (often prompted by an impending birth), and having witnessed adverse reactions to vaccines or their long term effects. In other cases, simply having access to more information was the factor that initiated their research. Talking to family and friends and contact with complementary health providers were the major one-on-one sources of information.

The AVN was not prominent in influencing a change of attitude. In fact, contact with the AVN was mentioned first in the decision making processes of only four people. However, it was a source of information that was used after people had embarked on the journey of finding out more about the vaccination issue. And it no doubt served as a support group for those people. It should be noted that a large number of people expressed dissatisfaction with the pro-vaccination attitudes of the government, the medical profession and vaccine manufacturers. This had been a major factor in making them suspicious of vaccines.

Vaccination practices

The negative attitudes to childhood vaccination were reflected in vaccination practices. Respondents have increasingly rejected vaccination in recent years. Vaccination histories (i.e. whether fully vaccinated, partially vaccinated, or not vaccinated) were provided for a total of 2,470 people. Of the 348 aged up to five years, only two percent were fully vaccinated and eight percent partly vaccinated. Of the 1,526 aged over 20 years, 87% had been fully or partly vaccinated. It is likely that the older family members were vaccinated because their parents were less questioning of vaccines.

Immediate adverse reactions and long term effects

Thirty-three percent said that at least one family member had suffered adverse reactions to vaccination. A wide range of reactions were mentioned. The most frequently mentioned reaction was fever, sweating and a high temperature (59 mentions). Further, inconsolable crying and screaming, often high pitched, were each mentioned 20 times. Other reactions listed more than 10 times were: skin discolouration or rash (21 mentions), ugly sore (21), swollen body parts (19), person vaccinated (usually a baby) being irritable, whingy or clingy (15), breathing problems (11), convulsions, fits or seizures (12) and ear infections (10). It is of concern that 22 reported a personality or behaviour change soon after vaccination. And 11 people claimed that the person being vaccinated had contracted the disease they were vaccinated against shortly after.

Thirty percent said that a family member had suffered a long term effect from vaccines. Again, a wide range of long term effects were mentioned. The most frequently mentioned long-term effects were allergies (including food intolerance) which were mentioned 41 times, and asthma (34). There were a host of behavioural issues: autism (23), learning problems (14), ADD or ADHD (10), speech deficiency (8), unspecified behaviour problems (7), together with a number of other serious behavioural problems mentioned less often. Sixty respondents said that at least one family member had suffered long term behaviour problems as a result of vaccines.

Other long term problems mentioned a high number of times were: chronic fatigue (21 times), eczema (21), gastrointestinal problems (17) and immunity issues (15). There were no reports of deaths of family members after vaccination. However, four respondents made anecdotal reports of vaccine related deaths suffered by relatives or acquaintances.

Benefits and risks of vaccination

Almost half (44%) of the respondents volunteered comments about the risks and benefits of vaccination and about other aspects of the vaccination issue. Many said they did not see any benefits in vaccination while there was general criticism of government vaccination policy, the medical profession and the vaccine industry. The lack of accurate reporting of vaccine reactions was a cause for concern. A significant number indicated there was a great need for more information and research on the long term effects of vaccination and that there was a need for greater community education with accurate information. Some respondents also described the social difficulties being faced by families who had decided against vaccination of their children. There was a consensus that the right of free choice in vaccination should be maintained.

The survey results indicate that most members of the AVN are in family circumstances where vaccination is an issue for their families. Many have children of an age where vaccination is recommended by health authorities. And many are now old enough to be concerned about the effects of vaccines on their grandchildren. They have gone to considerable trouble to use a wide range of vaccination information sources. They are rejecting vaccination. Further, a high proportion is claiming adverse reactions to vaccination in their family and, more alarmingly, serious long-term effects. These results indicate that there is an urgent need for soundly based long-term research on the part of health authorities to assess the validity of the claims being made. In particular, there is a need to track the long term physical and psychological health of vaccinated and unvaccinated children.

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Introduction

Background

The common perception in the community is that vaccines have been largely responsible for the declines last century in the morbidity and mortality from a whole range of common diseases. Both the government and the medical profession promote this point of view and actively encourage vaccination of babies from birth to ensure that these declines are not reversed.

A number of groups have questioned the conventional wisdom in recent years. This has occurred not only in Australia but also in other countries that promote mass vaccination programs. This is evidenced by the plethora of internet sites that are warning of the dangers of vaccination.

Vaccination is being increasingly questioned on two levels. Firstly, it is claimed that the declines in disease morbidity and mortality have occurred primarily in response to higher standards of living. Secondly, it is also claimed that many of the vaccines used are actually harmful with the potential to cause brain injury and deleterious effects on the body's auto immune response.

The Australian Vaccination Network (AVN) was formed in 1994 by a group of concerned parents, health professionals and others. It had a membership of approximately 1,000 in 1998 when it commissioned a mail-out membership survey to determine the characteristics of its members. The response rate was in excess of 40%. Briefly, the major findings¹ were:

1. The majority of respondents were female (89%) and most families represented in the survey were either couple or single parent families with children (94%).
2. In general, respondents had high levels of education, with 70% having a post school qualification.
3. Most respondents had accessed a wide range of information sources on vaccination.
4. Respondents overwhelmingly had negative attitudes to the practice of childhood vaccination. This negative attitude was reflected in the vaccination practices used. They had increasingly rejected vaccination for family members in the preceding years.
5. They reported that family members had experienced a wide range of immediate adverse reactions following vaccination. The most frequently mentioned were: fevers and a high temperature, inflammation and swelling, screaming (often high pitched), crying, feeling listless or off-colour, feeding problems, sore limbs, sleep disruption and diarrhoea.
6. Similarly, a wide range of long-term effects of vaccination were reported. Most distressing was that three said they had babies that died as a result of a vaccination shot. Other frequently mentioned long term issues were: asthma and other bronchial problems, allergies, immunity problems, ear infections, eczema, chronic fatigue syndrome, arthritis, attention deficit disorder and learning problems.
7. There was a high level of distrust of the government, the medical profession and vaccine manufacturers.

The results indicated an urgent need for soundly based research to assess the validity of the claims being made. Unfortunately, there have been no initiatives by any of the three major proponents of vaccination (government, medical profession, vaccine manufacturers) in the years since to address this need.

Despite the continued push by its proponents for widespread vaccination coverage, membership of the AVN has continued to grow since 1998. At the end of 2012, there were close to 2,000 members.

¹ Wilson T D (1999), A Profile of the Vaccination Awareness Movement in Australia (38 pages).

In order to update its database on the characteristics of its members, the AVN executive decided to commission a follow-up survey.

Problem statement and objectives

This most recent survey was carried out as an on-line survey. The objectives were almost identical to those of the 1998 survey. Specific questions of concern were:

- What are the biographical characteristics of members? Do members mostly have young families with children of an age when vaccination is an issue? What are the educational levels of members and what occupations do they have?
- What factors influenced members to join the AVN? What do they expect to get out of membership? What sources of information have they accessed on vaccination?
- How strong are the anti-vaccination attitudes that these people undoubtedly hold? What were the factors that influenced them to form their views?
- What vaccination procedures have members used in their families? To what extent do members believe that vaccines have affected family members?

Significance and limitations

This group of people can be expected to hold more negative attitudes to vaccination than the general population. However, the intent of the study was not to extrapolate results to the general population but simply to document the characteristics of this particular group. One purpose in collecting the data was to demonstrate to medical policy makers and health authorities the concerns that large numbers of people hold about vaccination.

Methods

Data collection

The questionnaire was designed and delivered using the web based SurveyMonkey.² package. A notice requesting members to complete the survey was emailed at the end of October 2012.

A key objective of the survey was to assess members' attitude to childhood vaccination. A Likert attitude scale was developed and validated to use in the 1998 AVN survey. The same set of statements was used again. The scale contains 18 statements – 10 statements favourable to childhood vaccination and eight that are unfavourable.

Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with each statement on a five-point scale. All statements favourable to childhood vaccination were scored: strongly agree = 4, agree = 3, neutral/undecided = 2, disagree = 1 and strongly disagree = 0. The unfavourable statements were scored in reverse order. The scores were added for each respondent. This resulted in an attitude score with a possible range of zero to 72. High scores indicate a positive attitude.

In addition, the following data were collected:

² <http://www.surveymonkey.com/>

1. Background factors (type of family unit, role of the respondent in the family, number of adults in the family taking an interest in the vaccination issue, reasons for joining AVN, socio-economic factors e.g. education level, employment, postcode);
2. Sources of information used on vaccination;
3. Attitudes to vaccination, including any reasons for a change in attitude in recent years;
4. Vaccination status of family members (age and sex of all family members, vaccinations received, immediate adverse reactions and long term effects suffered); and
5. General comments about the vaccination issue.

Respondents were asked to indicate their highest level of education using the broad classifications in the Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED)³. Respondents were also asked to list their major occupation if they were working or had worked in the past. Their responses were grouped using the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO)⁴.

Data analysis

The cut-off date for survey returns was 6th December 2012. Data were downloaded from the SurveyMonkey site into an Excel spreadsheet. Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Data contained in the report tables are mostly shown as percentages. There was some missing data for some questions but the missing data were mostly less than 10% of the possible responses. The figures shown in the tables are the percentages of valid responses. Some percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Response rate

The number of questionnaires received was 640, representing a return rate of 32%. Some respondents preferred to remain anonymous and did not provide their postal address. However, 530 members did provide details of their Australian postcodes and the representation from states for this group was: New South Wales (including ACT) 33%, Queensland 29%, Victoria 17%, Western Australia 12%, South Australia 6%, Tasmania 2% and Northern Territory 1%. There were also six questionnaires returned from overseas – two from New Zealand, two from China and one each from USA and the UK.

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2001), Australian Standard Classification of Education (ASCED). ABS Catalogue No. 1272.0

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006), Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO). ABS Catalogue No. 1220.0

Results

Background factors

The instructions on the questionnaire requested that “The survey should be completed by the member of your household that takes the most interest in the vaccination issue.” Table 1 shows the types of family units represented, the role of the person completing the questionnaire, and the numbers of adults in the household who follow the vaccination issue.

Table 1: Family background data

Family unit:	Percentage
Couple family with children	71
Couple family without children	9
One parent family	11
Other	<u>9</u>
	100%
Role in family unit:	
Husband (married or de facto)	17
Wife (married or de facto)	66
Single father	1
Single mother	10
Other	<u>6</u>
	100%
Number of adults in family taking an interest in vaccination issue:	
One	22
Two	63
Three or more	<u>15</u>
	100%

The majority of respondents (82%) had children. Seventy-one percent were from couple families with children while 11% were one parent families. Surprisingly, nine percent classified themselves as “couple families without children.” However, a high proportion of this category was actually couples with grown up children who had left home. Similarly, there were nine percent in the “other” category. There were many grandparents in this category, along with others such as single or divorced people. One person described her family as “two women and a dog.”

Around three quarters (76%) were either wives or single mothers, while 18% were husbands or single fathers. The other six percent were mostly made up of grandparents and single or divorced people with no children at home.

In the majority of households (85%), there were either one or two adults who took an interest in the vaccination issue.

The reasons for joining the AVN are grouped in Table 2. Most respondents indicated more than one reason.

Table 2. Reasons for joining AVN

Reason for joining AVN:	Percentage
Support the group - be involved	83
To get information	82
To stop compulsory vaccination	72
Because of an adverse reaction to a vaccine	17
Because of a long-term effect from a vaccine	17
Other	14

The data clearly show that a desire to support AVN and a need for information were major reasons for joining. The threat of compulsory vaccination was obviously high on the agenda of many people. There were also significant numbers of people who were prompted to join because they had witnessed adverse reactions or long-term effects from vaccines.

Respondents were asked to indicate their highest level of education on an eight point scale. Their responses are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Highest education level of respondents

Education level:	Percentage
Postgraduate degree level	20
Graduate diploma / graduate certificate	11
Bachelor degree	25
Advanced diploma / diploma	16
Certificate	12
Secondary education	14
Primary education	1
Other	1
Total	100%

Over 80% of respondents had completed some training since finishing high school. Further, 56% had been trained at bachelor degree level or higher. Overall, the AVN members who responded to the survey were highly educated.

Respondents were also asked for their year of birth to enable the calculation of their ages. The number who supplied both their year of birth and their education level was 581. Their average age was 46 years. The numbers in different age groups was:

Up to 40 years	196 (34%)
41 to 60 years	316 (54%)
61 years and over	69 (12%)

Predictably, there was a tendency for the younger respondents to have a higher level of education. This relationship is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Education levels and age

Education level:	Up to 40 years	41 to 60 years	Over 60 years
Postgraduate/Grad. Diploma or Grad Certificate/Bachelor degree	64	53	44
Advanced diploma/diploma/Certificate	28	29	26
Primary or secondary school/Other	<u>8</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>30</u>
Total	100%	100%	100%

The survey asked people to indicate their main occupation if they were currently working, or had worked in the past. Eighty-five percent (546 people) answered this question. Their replies were grouped into major areas using the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations. The distribution of replies for all survey respondents is shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Distribution of broad occupation groups

Occupation:	Percent
Managers	6
Professionals - health	
Health therapy ¹	20
Midwifery and nursing ²	7
Other health	2
Professionals – education ³	10
Professionals - other	12
Technicians and trades	4
Community and personal service workers	10
Clerical and administrative workers	10
Sales workers	3
Machinery operators and drivers	1
Labourers	1
Not answered ⁴	<u>15</u>
Total	100%

¹Includes 59 chiropractors and osteopaths, and 62 complementary health providers.

²Includes 32 registered nurses and 10 midwives.

³Includes 50 school teachers.

⁴ Not answered either because they had not worked in the past or because they did not respond to the question.

Professionals in the health area made up the biggest occupation group. These were mostly chiropractors, osteopaths, complementary health providers, nurses and midwives. School teachers and other educational professionals also accounted for a significant number (10%). The 12% who made up the rest of the professional group came from a variety of professions: arts and media (11 people), business, human resources and marketing (30), design, engineering, science, transport (7), information and communications (6) and legal, social and welfare professionals (13).

Community and personal service workers made up a significant number (10%). This group included health and welfare support workers and carers and aides. Similarly, clerical and administrative workers made up 10% of all survey respondents.

Sources of vaccination information

Respondents were asked to indicate from a list of 10 possible sources of information on vaccination which ones they had used. The percentages indicating the numbers using each source are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Sources of information on vaccination used

Information source:	
Medical literature	54%
Natural health magazines	75%
AVN information	96%
The internet	85%
Books	82%
TV programs	31%
Talking to medical professionals, e.g. GPs	37%
Talking to complementary health providers, e.g. naturopaths, homeopaths and chiropractors	77%
Talking to friends, family and other parents	57%
Vaccination meetings	30%
Other	5%

All sources of information listed were indicated as being used by a large number of respondents. Predictably, the AVN was the most used (96% of respondents). The internet and books were also each listed by over 80%. Natural health magazines and complementary health providers were also widely used.

Other sources of information listed were: complementary health studies (14 people), common sense or personal beliefs (4 people), have seen vaccine damaged children or personal experience (3 people), government information or websites (2 people), DVDs or CDs (2 people) and vaccine manufacturer information or product inserts (2 people).

The following information sources were also listed once each: health shop work, “worked in pharmacy for 10 years”, homebirth groups, radio programs, school projects, and overseas groups similar to AVN.

A majority of respondents had accessed a wide range of information sources. For example, 80% had accessed five or more of the information sources listed on the questionnaire.

Attitudes to childhood vaccination

Table 7 shows the responses to the 10 attitude statements that supported vaccination, while Table 8 shows the responses to the eight attitude statements that opposed vaccination.

Table 7: Percentage distributions of replies to statements that are favourable to childhood vaccination

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Doctors have the knowledge to warn parents of any likely adverse reactions to vaccination	7	18	11	34	30
Vaccinated children have less severe symptoms if they do catch the disease	3	7	17	35	38
Doctors can be trusted on issues like vaccination	0	0	4	31	64
The benefits of vaccination far outweigh the risks	1	1	6	29	63
Vaccination will help us eliminate infectious diseases from the human race	0	1	7	27	65
Vaccination is a soundly researched medical procedure	1	1	3	23	73
We need the majority of children to be vaccinated for the incidence of diseases to decrease	0	1	6	28	65
Unvaccinated children pose a risk to others	1	1	2	18	78
Parents who do not vaccinate are irresponsible	0	0	0	10	90
Schools should exclude non vaccinated children	1	0	1	8	90

Legend: SA = strongly agree, A = agree, U = undecided, D = disagree, SD = strongly disagree

Table 8: Percentage distributions of replies to statements that are unfavourable to childhood vaccination

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Parents who decide not to vaccinate have generally done their homework	57	39	2	1	0
On average, non-vaccinated children tend to be healthier than those that have been vaccinated	53	37	9	1	0
Vaccination could be responsible for the increase in chronic diseases such as asthma and diabetes	50	39	9	1	2
There are better ways to protect children against disease than childhood vaccination	65	31	3	0	0
There are more adverse reactions to vaccination than get reported	81	17	2	0	0
Children can still catch diseases they were vaccinated against	78	21	0	0	0
Parents and not the government should decide whether children are vaccinated	89	9	1	0	1
Parents need better information about the risks of vaccination	89	10	0	0	0

The responses highlight the negative attitudes of the respondents to childhood vaccination. There was general disagreement with the statements that were positive to vaccination and general agreement with the negative statements.

A total attitude score was calculated for each respondent (see Methods section for an explanation). This score had a possible range of zero to 72, with high scores indicating a positive attitude to childhood vaccination. The distribution of scores is shown in Table 9.

This distribution of scores highlights the overwhelming negative attitudes to childhood vaccination. Only one percent of respondents could be considered to be neutral to the practice, with the rest being either against or strongly against.

Table 9: Distribution of total attitude scores

Attitude score range:	Percentage
Strongly in favour of vaccination	
58 – 72	0 ¹
44 – 57	0
29 – 43	1
15 – 28	15
0 - 14	84
Strongly against vaccination	
	100%

¹ One respondent was in this category.

The questionnaire asked people whether they could remember a time when they had become less positive to the practice of vaccination i.e. less positive than they had previously been. In other words, had there been a turning point for them? Table 10 shows the number of respondents to which this applied, together with the number of years since this occurred.

Table 10: Numbers who had become less positive to vaccination than previously

Can you remember a time when your attitude to vaccination became less positive?	
Yes	85
No	<u>15</u>
	100%
If yes, how many years ago did your attitude to vaccination change?	
1 – 5 years	17
6 – 10 years	30
11 – 15 years	19
16 – 20 years	14
Over 20 years	<u>20</u>
	100%

A majority (85%) said they could remember a time when their attitude towards vaccination became less positive. For over half of these respondents, this had been more than 10 years ago i.e. it was not a recent event. It is likely that a high number in this category would have been older AVN members and have been members for many years.

Respondents were also asked to explain the reasons their attitude changed. Most described the decision making process they went through. For most, there was no one single factor that influenced them. The factors that influenced them to change were identified by sifting through the descriptions they gave. These factors are grouped into a number of areas as shown in Table 11.

For many, there was a particular event that set them on the path to researching the issue. The major events listed were: concern for doing the best for their family (often prompted by an impending birth), and having witnessed adverse reactions to vaccination or their long term effects.

Table 11 also shows that a large number of sources of information that were used to collect information. In some cases, this was the factor that initiated their research e.g. talking to families and friends. For others, as noted above, there was a particular event that prompted them to carry out research on the issue. The biggest category is a general one and is grouped as “Did research/became informed/started to think.” This would have, of course, included researching many of the more specific sources listed such as reading books, magazines and articles. Talking to

family and friends and contact with complementary health providers were the major one-on-one sources of information.

Table 11: Reasons for becoming less positive to the practice of vaccination

Event:	No. of times <u>mentioned</u>
Research prompted by a birth/having a family	97
Child or person with adverse reactions	107
Saw or experienced long term effects	115
Person caught disease it had been vaccinated against	11
Seeing healthy unvaccinated children	10
Witnessed kids being vaccinated	3
Concern about over vaccination	4
Concern about cervical cancer experiment	2
Concern about recall of vaccines	2
Reactions in animals	2
Other	6
Information source:	
Did research/became informed/started to think	148
Reading articles/books/magazines	65
Information from family and friends	58
Contact and information from complementary health providers	48
Part of training or work	47
Speaking with doctors	13
Internet	11
TV programs/other media/DVDs	9
Attending lecture/seminar	9
Contact with mid wife	4
Other	2
AVN information	
Lecture or seminar	4
AVN website	5
AVN magazine	4
AVN "Vaccination Roulette" book	3
Other AVN contact e.g. phone, personal meeting	17
Other reasons:	
Attitude of pharmaceutical industry, medicos and the government	53
Ethically opposed/instinct	6
Total	865

The AVN was not prominent in influencing attitudes. In fact, contact with the AVN was mentioned first in the decision making processes described in only four cases. However, it was a source of information that was used after people had embarked on the journey of finding out more about the vaccination issue. And it no doubt served as a support group for those people.

It should be noted that a large number of people expressed dissatisfaction with the pro-vaccination attitudes of the government, the medical profession and vaccine manufacturers. This had been a major factor in making them suspicious of vaccines.

Each person that said they had changed their attitude had a different story to tell. The data in Table 11 summarize their responses. However, to present a more complete picture, Appendix A has been compiled to show the unique perspectives from which different people approached the issue. This is only a selected sample of the replies that came in.

Family vaccination levels

The questionnaire contained questions that asked for the following data:

1. The number of people in the family unit, including the person filling out the questionnaire, their partner and children, even if not living at home.
2. The gender and year of birth of each family member.
3. The vaccination history of each family member: fully vaccinated, partially vaccinated, not vaccinated, or don't know.

Table 12 shows details of family sizes.

Table 12: Family sizes of respondents

Family size:	Percentage
One	2
Two	9
Three	18
Four	34
Five	22
Six to ten	13
Eleven or more	2
	100%
Mean family size	4.5 people
Total number of family members	2,664

Most families (85%) consisted of five people or less. The mean family size was four and a half. There were a few large families with 11 or more family members, although some of these respondents may have been including grandchildren in their family size. The total combined number of people was 2,664.

The questionnaire allowed for a maximum family size of only 10 people when collecting details of the age of family members and their vaccination status. This, combined with the fact that some respondents did not show the age or vaccination status of all family members, meant that the total number of people who could be identified by age and vaccination status was 2,470. Table 13 shows the number of people in various age groups by vaccination status.

Table 13: Vaccination status of family members by age group

Vaccination status:	Up to 5 years (348 people)	6 to 10 years (267 people)	11 to 20 years (329 people)	Over 20 years (1,526 people)	Total (2,470 people)
Fully vaccinated	2	5	11	44	29
Partially vaccinated	8	19	36	43	34
Not vaccinated	89	75	53	10	34
Don't know	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The most striking feature of the data in Table 13 is that there has been a great decline in vaccination for the younger age groups. For example, only 10% of children five years or younger had been given any vaccination shots at all, and most of these were only partially vaccinated. For people aged more than 20 years, the proportion that had received some vaccinations was 87%.

Incidence of perceived immediate adverse reactions and long term effects

The questionnaire asked whether any family member had suffered immediate adverse reactions to a vaccine. Respondents were given three options to check – yes, no and don't remember. There was a similar question asking whether people believed any family member had suffered long term effects from vaccines. The options to check were – yes, no and don't know or not sure. Table 14 shows the percentages of the total responses that fell in various response categories.

Table 14: Incidence of immediate adverse reactions and long term effects

	Suffered adverse reactions?		
	Yes	No	Don't remember or not sure
Suffered long term effects?			
Yes	17%	6%	7%
No	4%	14%	7%
Don't know or not sure	12%	10%	23%

In total, 33% of respondents said that at least one family member had suffered an adverse reaction. And 17% said that, as well as having a family member with an adverse reaction, they believed that at least one family member had suffered long term effects.

On the other hand, six percent said they did not recall an adverse reaction in the family but they believed a family member had suffered long term effects. In total, 30% felt that a family member had long term effects.

Immediate adverse reactions

For those respondents that indicated a family member had suffered an adverse reaction, there was a question asking for more details: which family member, their age when the reaction occurred, the symptoms, whether the family member was seen by a GP, whether the reaction was confirmed as being caused by the vaccine and whether the reaction was reported to the government.

Thirty-three percent replied that a family member had suffered an immediate reaction to a vaccine. Table 15 shows the number of times particular adverse reactions were mentioned. These are grouped together as much as possible so that similar symptoms are listed together.

Table 15: Number of times immediate adverse reactions were reported

Fever/sweating/temperature	59	Ugly sore or red sore	21
Breathing problems	11	Swollen body part/swelling	19
Headaches/migraines	6	Numbness/heaviness	6
Bronchiolitis	4	Turned yellow	2
Chest infections/bronchitis	3	Paralysis	2
Flu symptoms	2	Inflammation/swelling at injection site	1
Glandular fever	2	Blue lips and face	1
Anaphylaxis (serious allergic reaction)	2	Local pain	1
Hay fever	1	Red in face	1
Pneumonia	1	Eyes rolling back	1
		Swollen glands	1
Inconsolable crying	20	Hypotonia (low muscle tone)	1
Screaming/high pitched scream	20		
Prolonged moaning	1	Irritability/whingy/clingy	15
		Listless/offcolour/drowsiness/lethargy/malaise	8
Convulsions/fits/seizures	12	Depression	1
Fainting	6	Did not like being held	1
Collapse/limp/shock	3		
Delirium	3	Tonsillitis	5
Nausea	2	Throat infection	1
Hallucinations	2	Immune disorder	1
Encephalitis	2		
Coma	2	Fatigue	7
		Muscle aches	2
Sleep disruption	8	Lost movement in legs	2
Sleepy	2	Painful joints	1
		Neurological damage to one side of face	1
Skin discolouration or rash	21	Flapping arms	1
Ear infection	10	Shaking	1
Eczema	4		
Blisters in mouth, hands, throat and feet	1	Blood pressure dropped	2
Dermatitis	1	High mercury level	1
Vomiting	9	Unwell/run down	13
Gut problems, incl. leaky gut	6	Libido change	1
Feeding problems	3	“Body shut down”	1
Diarrhoea	3		
Stomach aches/gastric upset	2	Personality or behaviour change	22
Irregular bowel movements	2	Delayed development	1
Green slimy diarrhoea	1		
Loose sloppy stools	1	Hospitalised	7
Would not drink	1	Unable to attend school	3
Bladder problems	1	Time off work	1
Constipation	1	Caught disease vaccinated against	11

A wide range of adverse reactions were mentioned. The most frequently mentioned reaction, and something that is often regarded as a common consequence of vaccination apparently, was fever, sweating and a high temperature (59 mentions). Further, inconsolable crying and screaming, often high pitched, were each mentioned 20 times.

Other reactions listed more than 10 times were: skin discolouration or rash (21 mentions), ugly sore (21), swollen body parts (19), person vaccinated (usually a baby) being irritable, whingy or clingy (15), breathing problems (11), convulsions, fits or seizures (12) and ear infections (10).

It is of concern that 22 reported a personality or behaviour change soon after vaccination. And 11 people claimed that a family member had contracted the disease they were vaccinated against shortly after the vaccination.

One hundred and eighty three people described the adverse reactions suffered. Many, of course, mentioned more than one symptom as part of the one reaction e.g. crying and listlessness from the one vaccination. Around 85% (of the 183) mentioned one, two or three symptoms in their family.

From the information provided, there were 133 children vaccinated as babies who had suffered immediate reactions – 78 males and 55 females. Respondents were asked to provide a written description of the adverse reactions suffered. Many accounts were incomplete in terms of whether a doctor had been consulted, whether the reactions were confirmed as being caused by the vaccine and whether the reaction had been reported to the government. However, Appendix B contains a number of selected case studies where these aspects are mentioned.

Long term effects

Thirty percent said a family member had suffered a long-term effect from a vaccine. Table 16 shows the number of times particular long term effects were mentioned. They are also grouped together as much as possible so that similar long term effects are listed together.

The most frequently mentioned long-term effects were allergies (including food intolerance) which were mentioned 41 times, asthma (34) and autism (23).

There are a host of behavioural issues grouped with autism. These include: learning problems (14), ADD or ADHD (10), speech deficiency (8), unspecified behaviour problems (7), together with a number of other serious behavioural problems mentioned less often. Sixty respondents said that at least one family member had suffered long term behaviour problems as a result of vaccines.

Other long term problems mentioned a high number of times were: chronic fatigue (21 times), eczema (21), gastrointestinal problems (17) and immunity issues (15).

There were no confirmed reports of deaths of family members after vaccination (There were three reported baby deaths in the 1998 AVN membership survey). However, one respondent had a son that died of Hodgkin's Lymphoma when he was 24 years old (born 1982). An alternative GP said he was the type of child that should never have been vaccinated and that it would have been a contributing factor. There were four anecdotal reports of deaths in the descriptive answers given to the question about why respondents had become less positive to vaccination. These were deaths suffered by relatives or acquaintances. Refer to Appendix A.

One hundred and eighty people described the long term effects that family members had suffered. As with adverse reactions, many mentioned more than one long term effect. Some individual family members would have suffered more than one effect e.g. asthma and food intolerance suffered by the one person. Around 90% (of the 180) described one, two or three long term effects in their family.

From the information provided, there were 114 children vaccinated as babies who had suffered long term effects – 79 males and 35 females. Respondents were asked to provide a written description of the long term effects suffered. Again, many accounts were incomplete in terms of whether

mainstream or complementary health providers had been consulted. Appendix B contains a number of case studies where these aspects are mentioned.

Table 16: Number of times long-term effects were mentioned

Allergies (incl. food intolerance)	41	High heavy metal levels	5
Hay fever	4	Diabetes	4
Anaphylaxis	2	Blood disorder	2
		Toxins in blood	1
Autism	23	Pyroluria	1
Learning problems	14		
ADD/ADHD	10	Chronic fatigue	21
Speech deficiency	8	Arthritis	5
Behaviour problems	7	Fibromyalgia	4
Mental illness (incl. bipolar)	4	Multiple sclerosis	1
Depression	4		
Dyspraxia	3	Ear infections	9
Oppositional defiant disorder (OD)	3	Hearing loss	3
Personality change	2	Rhinitis	3
Mood swings	2	Ear, nose & throat problems	2
Memory concentration problems	2	Auditory processing disorder	2
Drug dependence	2		
Social interaction issues	1	Eczema	21
Obsessive compulsive disorder (OC)	1	Skin rash	10
Dyslexia	1	Melanoma	1
Schizophrenia	1	Vitiligo	1
Retained primitive reflexes	1		
		Gastro intestinal problems	17
Asthma	34	Crohn's disease	4
Colds	1		
Respiratory problems	1	Immunity problems	15
Pneumonia	1	Candida	1
		Primary biliary cirrhosis	1
Motor problems	6		
Epilepsy	6	Headaches/migraines	5
Bed wetting	3	Meningitis	1
Delayed development	3		
Growth problems	2	Tonsillitis	4
Clumsiness	2	Polycystic ovary syndrome	2
Poor muscle strength/hypotonia	2	Heart problems	1
Sleep problems	2	Cervical cancer	1
Eye problems	2	Protein in urine	1
Hair problems	1	Glandular fever	1
Chronic inflammatory polyneuropathy	1	Constantly ill	2

General comments

Almost half (44%) of the respondents volunteered comments about the risks and benefits of vaccination and about other aspects of the vaccination issue. These comments covered a range of issues and points of view. Appendix C contains some examples of the comments made. They were grouped into the following 10 areas:

1. *Risks of vaccines* – 71 people commented. There was a universal view that the risks of vaccination far outweighed the benefits.

2. *Reporting of childhood reactions* – three people commented. Their view was that only a very small fraction of reactions actually get reported to the Adverse Drug Reactions Advisory Committee (ADRAC)⁵.
3. *Need for more information for parents* – 40 commented. The consensus was that the information that is being made available to parents was misleading and inaccurate. Some said that the inserts accompanying vaccines should be more prominently displayed.
4. *Comparison of health of vaccinated and unvaccinated children* – 13 commented. The consensus was that unvaccinated children tend to be healthier than vaccinated children.
5. *Upholding the right of free choice* – 38 people commented. All supported free choice.
6. *Criticism of the medical profession, the government, drug companies and the media* – 72 people made comments. Various aspects were mentioned e.g. pushing the use of vaccines in the pursuit of profits, presenting a biased view of the value of vaccines by the media, denial by doctors of obvious adverse reactions.
7. *Pro-vaccination views* – six people expressed what could be considered some level of support for vaccination.
8. *Need for more research* – 14 people mentioned this. Various lines of research were suggested e.g. looking at the health levels of vaccinated and unvaccinated children, research to determine a safe age to administer vaccines, the efficacy of combining a number of vaccines together, whether a vaccine dosage should vary with the size of the baby.
9. *Issues for non vaccinating parents* – 16 people commented. The risk of feeling alienated from other parents was a concern, as was the risk of being censured by the medical profession.
10. *Feedback on the work of the AVN* – 46 people commented. Individual comments are not shown in this report. However, there was universal support and appreciation expressed towards the AVN, particularly to the outgoing president of the organisation.

⁵ Replaced in 2010 by the Advisory Committee on the Safety of Medicines (ACSOM).

Major results and implications

The internet link to the survey questionnaire was emailed to all AVN members (approximately 2,000) at the end of October 2012, with a closing date for returns of 6th December. Six hundred and forty questionnaires were returned, a response rate in excess of thirty percent. The following are the major survey results:

1. The majority of respondents were female (80%), and couple or single parent families with children accounted for 82% of all families represented. The other 18% of families included people with children that had left home, many of them now grandparents, together with some single and divorced people.
2. The average age of respondents was 46 years, with a range from 23 to 90 years. Around two thirds of all respondents were older than 40 years. Although it was generally the female parent in the family who responded, two or more adults took an interest in the vaccination issue in four out of five households.
3. Most indicated that there were a number of reasons why they joined the AVN. The main reasons for joining were to support the group and be involved (83% of all respondents), and to get information (83%). The threat of compulsory vaccination was a factor for 72%. And 17% said they were members because of an adverse reaction to a vaccine, and 17% because of a long term effect.
4. The education level of respondents was quite high overall. For example, over 80% had completed some training since completing high school, and 56% were trained to bachelor degree level or above. There was a tendency for the younger respondents to have higher level qualifications than the older respondents.
5. Eighty five percent listed their occupation to indicate where they were currently working or had worked in the past. Replies were grouped into major areas using the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations. Fifty-one percent were in professional occupations. Professionals in the health area made up 29% of the total. These were mostly chiropractors, osteopaths, complementary health providers, nurses and midwives. School teachers and other educational professionals also made up a large group (10%). Another 12% were other professionals in a variety of occupations.
6. Most respondents had taken the initiative to access a wide range of sources of information on vaccination. For example, 80% said they had used five or more of the 10 sources of information listed on the questionnaire. Natural health magazines, AVN information, the internet, books and talking to complementary health providers were all used by more than 70%.
7. Respondents overwhelmingly had negative attitudes to the practice of childhood vaccination. This negative attitude was highlighted by respondents' answers to 18 statements contained in a Likert attitude scale. A majority, (85%), had become less positive to the practice of vaccination at some point in their past. For over half of these people, this had been over 10 years ago. For many, there was a particular event that set them on the path to researching the issue. The major events listed were: concern for doing the best for their family (often prompted by an impending birth), and having witnessed adverse reactions to vaccination or their long term effects. In other cases, simply having access to more information was the

factor that initiated their research. Talking to family and friends and contact with complementary health providers were the major one-on-one sources of information.

8. The AVN was not prominent in influencing a change of attitude. In fact, contact with the AVN was mentioned first in the decision making processes described by only four people. However, it was a source of information that was used after people had embarked on the journey of finding out more about the vaccination issue. And it no doubt served as a support group for those people. It should be noted that a large number of people expressed dissatisfaction with the pro-vaccination attitudes of the government, the medical profession and vaccine manufacturers. This had been a major factor in making them suspicious of vaccines.
9. The negative attitudes to childhood vaccination were reflected in vaccination practices. Respondents have increasingly rejected vaccination in recent years. The vaccination status of family members was provided for a total of 2,470 people. Of the 348 of these aged up to five years, only two percent were fully vaccinated and eight percent partly vaccinated. Of the 1,526 aged over 20 years, 87% had been fully or partly vaccinated. It is likely that the older family members were vaccinated because their parents were less questioning of vaccines.
10. Thirty two percent said that at least one family member had suffered adverse reactions to vaccination. A wide range of reactions were mentioned. The most frequently mentioned reaction was fever, sweating and a high temperature (59 mentions). Further, inconsolable crying and screaming, often high pitched, were each mentioned 20 times. Other reactions listed more than 10 times were: skin discolouration or rash (21 mentions), ugly sore (21), swollen body parts (19), person vaccinated (usually a baby) being irritable, whiny or clingy (15), breathing problems (11), convulsions, fits or seizures (12) and ear infections (10).

It is of great concern that 22 reported a personality or behaviour change soon after vaccination. And 11 people claimed that the person being vaccinated had contracted the disease they were vaccinated against shortly after.

11. Thirty percent said that a family member had suffered a long term effect from vaccines. Again, a wide range of long term effects were mentioned. The most frequently mentioned long-term effects were allergies (including food intolerance) which were mentioned 41 times, and asthma (34).

There were a host of behavioural issues: autism (23), learning problems (14), ADD or ADHD (10), speech deficiency (8), unspecified behaviour problems (7), together with a number of other serious behavioural problems mentioned less often. Sixty respondents said that at least one family member had suffered long term behaviour problems as a result of vaccines.

Other long term problems mentioned a high number of times were: chronic fatigue (21 times), eczema (21), gastrointestinal problems (17) and immunity issues (15). There were no reports of deaths of family members after vaccination. However, there were four anecdotal reports of deaths suffered by relatives or acquaintances.

12. Almost half (44%) of the respondents volunteered comments about the risks and benefits of vaccination and about other aspects of the vaccination issue. Many said they did not see any benefits in vaccination while there was general criticism of government vaccination policy, the medical profession and the vaccine industry. The lack of accurate reporting of vaccine reactions was a cause for concern. . A significant number indicated there was a great need

for more information and research on the long term effects of vaccination and that there was a need for greater community education with accurate information. Some respondents also described the social difficulties being faced by families who had decided against vaccination of their children. There was a consensus that the right of free choice in vaccination should be maintained.

The survey results indicate that most members of the AVN are in family circumstances where vaccination is an issue for their families. Many have children of an age where vaccination is recommended by health authorities. And many are now old enough to be concerned about the effects of vaccines on their grandchildren. They have gone to considerable trouble to use a wide range of vaccination information sources. They are rejecting vaccination. Further, a high proportion is claiming adverse reactions to vaccination in their family and, more alarmingly, serious long-term effects. These results indicate that there is an urgent need for soundly based long-term research on the part of health authorities to assess the validity and accuracy of the claims they are making. In particular, there is a need to track the long term physical and psychological health of vaccinated and unvaccinated children.

Appendix A: Reasons for attitude change to vaccination

- My nephew was vaccine damaged and after every shot he got slower in speech and eventually had a tick in his head whereby he keeps blinking his eyes.
- My son reacted severely after being vaccinated at three. My next door neighbour then told me her baby boy died the night he was vaccinated.
- That's when my child went from being healthy to a sick, floppy state and my world turned upside down.
- Death of the sister of friends who had been severely damaged by vaccination 20 years before.
- A two year old girl was brought into the chiropractic office where I had just started working. She was constantly fitting and her mother told me she was completely normal until the minute the doctor stuck the needle in her arm for her two year old vaccination. Then I started to read all I could.
- I studied teaching in 1989 and did a practicum at a special school. The majority of the children there had been severely neurologically damaged by vaccines.
- I saw a perfectly healthy and happy, normal child turn into a very unhappy and sick autistic child after receiving the MMR vaccination. I then started to do my own research.
- When my doctor called me selfish and irresponsible for not vaccinating my then 12 month old son with the MMR vaccine as I was unsure if the vaccine was indeed linked to autism. Thank you Dr Andrew Wakefield.
- I had a child diagnosed with autism at the age of two. He was a completely normal baby until he was given all of his vaccinations and then he changed.
- My daughter developed autism. I took her to a naturopath who suggested it could be vaccination. I then spent the next seven years researching everything I could on vaccination. Met a few doctors on my journey who also agreed with me. Found the AVN. Researched some more and came to the conclusion that there was nothing good about vaccination. So my two other kids aren't vaccinated.
- My daughter had the initial three vaccines - cried for 24 hours very distressed. Visited my doctor who said (please don't quote me) – “Do some reading and don't get the next lot.”
- My third daughter had a skin reaction all over her body following the MMR injection. It lasted a long time. I heard that a whooping cough jab could cause brain damage. I asked my doctor and he said that he had seen a ward full of brain damaged children in a major UK training hospital following their whooping cough immunisation. So my fourth child only had CDT immunisation. Now I would not immunise at all.
- I had a school friend who graduated as a biochemist and then held a responsible position at the Commonwealth Serum Laboratory. She was concerned enough not to vaccinate her own children. I did still vaccinate mine, but I was very worried about what to do.
- An elder chiropractor in my profession educated me about vaccination and why it was so bad for neurological development. He was right! After 11 years of practice I see the ongoing side effects of vaccination as well as the lack of accountability the medical profession takes for the injuries it causes!
- I received the Hep B vaccine and experienced chronic fatigue immediately and it continued. Doctor dismissed my suggestion of a link to the vaccine. Five years of chronic fatigue was more than enough for me to realise how dangerous they are. Then I saw dead babies from vaccines in my police career. I saw parents being routinely charged with manslaughter after their baby had died from vaccines. This is one crazy world of evil.
- Facebook has made it possible to watch friends and friends of friends around you announce that it is little Jimmy's needles today and within a few days he is in hospital with a 'weird virus' and next week they announce he is now suffering seizures etc. I see something like this daily!
- I was so naive that I still had my children vaccinated after my daughter was hospitalized for days because of convulsions following a vaccination; and even though a neighbour, when I was a teenager, had told 'us' (the family) about how she and her siblings missed out on being vaccinated the day so many children died in Bundaberg following vaccination⁶. My neighbour and her siblings were dressed, ready for town, on the back of their truck and the truck wouldn't start. How lucky could they be?

⁶ Twelve Bundaberg children died after a diphtheria vaccination in 1928. Reference: Akers, H.F. and Porter, S.A.T. (2008). *Bundaberg's Gethsemane: the tragedy of the inoculated children*. Royal Historical Society of Queensland Journal. Vol. 20, No. 7.

- I never questioned vaccination but after my daughter's severe side effects I would not accept the "coincidence" explanation I received from the medical profession. I started doing my own research. I have lost almost all trust in western medicine and medical doctors - and only consult natural therapists now. If I do need a doctor, which is hardly ever, I go to my GP who shares my concerns and supports my beliefs. She confessed to me that my concerns are valid. She signed my Conscientious Objection forms no questions asked.
- Meryl Dorey spoke to my university naturopathy class about the risks and the lack of scientific evidence to support vaccination. I was devastated. I had never questioned vaccination before and I was very disappointed in myself. I spoke to my partner and we researched the information. There was so much evidence to support what I'd learned. Part of me wishes I'd never been at that lesson - ignorance is bliss. How lovely and easy it was to believe that vaccinations were not only safe but also effective. But we are now in a much better position to support and protect our family. It just involves a lot more work in terms of research and defending ourselves among our friends, families and health professionals.
- When pregnant I was advised to have vaccinations that to me seemed crazy. I, like the majority of parents, hadn't thought too much about immunising my children until this moment. This led to our immersing ourselves in both sides of the vaccination debate to where, I am happy to say, we are today. Three healthy children aged six, three and one who don't know what a needle is and until school this year had never taken a course of antibiotics. Thanks Meryl for everything you do. We live in a small town where everyone knows everyone and our choice is something we keep to ourselves. We are so inspired by the work you do for the people of Australia.
- I was all for vaccination as I thought that was the right thing to do. My first child was vaccinated at birth and at six weeks of age. After his vaccine at six weeks, he became ill and was hospitalised a week later for RSV/bronchiolitis. Doctors told me it was just a coincidence, but I feel that it wasn't. I also received a booster whooping cough vaccine at the same time and became ill with a bad case of the flu. I have not been sick since that time until this March when I started to lose strength in my arms and legs. I gradually became so weak I could no longer shower myself, brush my hair, dress myself, walk up stairs or lift a coffee mug. I was hospitalised and diagnosed with CIDP, a form of demyelination of the nerves. The cause of my problem has still not been found (it can be caused by infections, bacteria, chemicals, vaccines) but if you follow the path back to when I was last sick it was just after a vaccine. This has further increased my choice not to vaccinate my own children!
- One of my children had a severe reaction to her first vaccination (anaphylaxis) and nothing was said to inform me other than to encourage me to continue vaccination without the pertussis. Three years later I read "Immunity - let's keep it" where all the reactions were described and I realised I had been duped by medical professionals regarding the danger. I never vaccinated again. My first six children were vaccinated up to two and a half while the last five were unvaccinated. None of the younger ones even has a medical record due to their great health and well developed immune system.
- My third child was born ill. I asked for her vaccinations to be delayed and the doctor left the room and sent in 'Attila the Hun' to tell me I was irresponsible and that people like me were the cause of illness remaining in the community. I was gobsmacked and so I started to look into the issue. I read articles, magazines, watched videos and talked to people. The logic of immunisation did not stand up under scrutiny. It took me another three years to have the courage to retake complete control of my family's health and I eventually made a career out of it. I thank 'Attila' in my mind for the trigger that sent me to the light!
- My attitude was enforced at my first born's play group 12 years ago when, after the 18 month shots, one of the toddlers in the group clearly was affected by his vaccinations and went from being the most talkative, most physically adept child in the group to becoming severely autistic, dyspraxic and lost his ability to walk for months thereafter. To this day he has severe global developmental delay.
- After receiving the appropriate vaccination, my nephew still contracted whooping cough. At the time there was a spate of cases and the press demonised parents who did not vaccinate their children. But my nephew was and the Health Department were rather officious. Apparently there were a number of cases where children were vaccinated. But the press never mentioned these cases. That's when I began to question the whole vaccination deal. I nursed a young adult who was severely mentally retarded as a result of vaccination. It was even written in her chart that her retardation was caused by the vaccination. It started me questioning.

- We initially vaccinated our first child, our son, although we were never fully comfortable so we delayed each vaccination by a few months. At the time, as new and naive parents, we did not feel confident or informed enough not to go ahead with vaccinating as there was so much scaremongering from friends, doctors etc. We agonised each time he got jabbed. Our son developed eczema and by the age of one had severe allergy to dairy and nuts as well as asthma. That's when alarm bells started ringing for us and after months of reading and research (thank you, AVN!) we stopped the vaccinations at 18 months and felt it was the best decision we could've made for him. Our daughter is not vaccinated at all.
- A neighbour gave me information about the dangers of vaccines 21 years ago, after my first child was born. At that stage, I was still too caught up in the fear and propaganda about vaccines. However, when my second child was about a year old, a new vaccine appeared on the schedule. I was given the usual spiel about it being imperative. But at that stage there was no catch-up schedule for my son who was just 21 months older. At that point the penny dropped. "How stupid do you think I am? You are telling me one child is at risk of death from this disease and the other who lives in the same house is at no risk at all." That was the catalyst that forced me to start researching. I was horrified by what I discovered and discontinued vaccination from that point.
- I asked two friends - both GPs - how much time they spent learning about vaccines at university. One answered, "None actually." The second answered, "None, but everyone knows it's the right thing to do." Later I gave the second person a video (produced by the AVN I believe). They returned it a few weeks later without even viewing it, and had written on the cover "Anti-vaccination propaganda." I had simply asked her to view the video and give me feedback. The arrogant response bewildered me. Thankfully, it forced me into doing to my own research.
- I worked for GlaxoSmithKline, finishing in 2007, selling the first of the Cervarix vaccines. Not a lot of information was delivered by the marketing department other than to say it was 'better' than Gardasil. I started to feel a little uneasy about it. Then more came out about adverse events that were 'patched' up by a marketing spiel delivered by us reps. In 2007 the only reason I didn't get this 'fabulous' vaccine (that only covered something like 3 strains out of 200+) was because I was pregnant. This precaution also sounded alarm bells in my mind - why would it at any stage not be safe? Eventually after the birth of my daughter, and overwhelming hormonal drive to protect her from 'everything' I wondered about the vaccines...I was 'jabbed' with this and that at birth with zero explanation! Learning about BPA in bottles prompted me to query everything I touched that I would give to my daughter.
- When my infant daughter got encephalitis after vaccination and I began to research the issue with very limited information at that time. I have since realised that my own autoimmune condition is related to vaccination. Also my brother-in-law's nephew died after vaccination some years ago and I have an autistic grandson due to vaccination - no one dare tell me otherwise.
- My daughter was "encouraged" to have a flu shot after her first child was born - she got really sick the evening after the vaccination and went to emergency where they admitted her. They refused to believe it was related to the flu shot and treated her for a blood infection. When test results came back, there was no infection and they still said it must have been so mild that it didn't show up. When I asked if it could be the vaccine, the three doctors present said yes, but highly unlikely - the one who responded couldn't look me in the eye when he said that. I felt then that there was a cover up. My daughter and I then began to research more and realised that there was so much we were not told and felt quite betrayed by the medical profession. If they had told us the truth we would not have been so sceptical.
- I gave birth to our first child and started researching. My intuition kicked in and I felt compelled to research and question, and ultimately we decided not to use vaccination. Thankfully my husband was on board and has the same views because without support that it would be difficult, perhaps too difficult for me to not vaccinate alone without any support from family or friends. I read books and I had a long phone call with Meryl Dorey who I thank deeply for the profound impact she had on our lives, and my ability to listen to what my intuition was already trying to tell me. Thank-you so very much Meryl!
- I completed a diploma in Medical Herbalism. At about the same time my two year old grandson was vaccinated against my advice for measles. The result of that vaccination was a very sick toddler. He developed the worst case of measles I have ever experienced and he had guardia in his bowel. The

batch of vaccine was investigated and found to be contaminated. It took the child several months to recover and his parents never vaccinated him again. He is now 27 years old and very healthy.

- Working in the medical industry and talking to other staff and one doctor who does not vaccinate his own children - opened my eyes up and made me question vaccination. Family has also played a big part in my anti-vaccination attitude.
- My son became very sick after his MMR shot and, after going to four paediatricians, I finally found a great doctor called (*Name withheld*) who told me I was right about the vaccines. From then on, it became clearer and clearer about the truth of vaccines.
- My mother had given me some information to read before I had my daughter and I was shocked by the ingredients. I had a girlfriend who was a midwife and she mentioned most of the vaccinated kids that she sees at the hospital had been vaccinated for that particular disease. Hence I didn't vaccinate my baby.
- While I was doing my nurse training I got very sick after receiving my vaccines. I then noted a number of patients this also happened to. I nursed patients with diseases that were supposedly wiped out by vaccines, and the attending doctor told me that the vaccines actually caused the disease (polio) in these particular patients.
- After suspecting a link between my vaccinations and my own "inconclusive" "strange virus which resulted in one sided deafness as an infant and constant ear infections, then my own children's constant bronchial infections, ear infections and asthma and another family member's immediate severe adverse reaction to a scheduled vaccination, I started my own research into vaccinations. I am disgusted that never has a "health professional" discussed with me or my husband or my parents about what the ingredients, the side effects or the benefits and risks of vaccinations are.
- When my doctor of 10 years told raised her voice to me when I was asking her questions about what research had been done on the impact of combining vaccines into one needle. She was quite exasperated with all my questions and ended up telling me that it's premmie babies like mine that die from disease. The best answer she gave me about combining the needles was that it was done because parents were getting too upset by how many different needles there were and so putting more into one needle meant there were less needles needed. Hardly scientific research on the cocktail of chemicals getting injected into little bodies is it?
- When I was pregnant I read many natural parenting magazines and publications. I started to hear about the MMR causing autism and then I looked into other vaccines. I didn't realise all vaccines were bad, just thought the MMR was. I had trouble finding information on-line, I think my searching skills were rusty back then. I vaccinated my child against Hep B at birth, something I will regret every day for the rest of my life, though I do believe he has not suffered any lasting damage. I felt extremely pressured to vaccinate by my mother-in-law. When in hospital with my son, I saw a nurse who had worked with my GP. She had just had a baby herself. I naively asked her opinion of vaccination and she went on with the expected rant, which scared me. Fortunately, a midwife overheard the conversation and later took me aside and had a conversation with me and told me about the AVN. On her next shift, she brought me some pamphlets and my education truly began then. I joined the AVN, researched some more, saw a homeopath and discussed it with him, found out my lactation consultant shared my views, went to an AVN seminar which is what finally swayed my partner - the rest is history. I feel like I owe my son's perfect health, and perhaps even his life, to Meryl Dorey for her passion and selfless commitment to the cause and to that midwife. I like to believe I would have come to this point on my own, but how can I be sure? I could not be more grateful. The constant sickness I see in children around us is overwhelming to me. How do the parents not see that something isn't right? My son is nearly five and has had two 24 hour, very mild illnesses and one stomach upset that lasted 24 hours and was only pain. This is a testament to his lack of pharmaceuticals and his chemical free lifestyle.

Appendix B: Case study accounts of adverse reactions and long-term effects

Behavioural problems e.g. autism, ADHD, Asperger's

Mother (53), an author, with two daughters aged 27 and 24 and one son aged 23. All family members are partially vaccinated.

Son age three was triple dosed in 1992. Was a very placid three-year old child. Became very aggressive after. It was like a total change in personality overnight. GP stated I needed a rest and did not believe me. I did not report the change. Son still has aggressive behaviour and is termed ADD.

Father (63) with four children ranging from 24 to 18. All partially vaccinated. Self employed in the catering industry.

Son (second child) born 1989. MMR at 12 months. Suffers from autism / epilepsy / Intellectual disability / behavioural disorders Temperature and screaming first 24 hours. Not reported to government by GP as years passed prior to major diagnosis.

A 50 year old mother of two sons aged 21 and 16. The younger is not vaccinated.

My son born in 1991 received his first vaccinations at seven months. He slipped into a SIDS-like coma from which I couldn't rouse him. He slept for 14 hours then woke up. I never saw a GP. And I didn't know at the time that he had suffered a serious reaction. I just know that his behaviour was a bit different from that episode. He was diagnosed at four years with autism. He also has ADHD. A mainstream paediatrician saw him for 13 years to administer Ritalin for him. All through this time, and up to now, we have also used lots of complementary medicine, which I think has played an enormous part in restoring his health.

Mother (49) who has worked in finance, human resources and administration. Seven children ranging from 20 to seven years. The two youngest are not vaccinated.

My son, who was outgoing and cheerful and very social at the age of four and a half, within weeks of having his preschool entry vaccinations done, he became the total opposite. He had slight swelling and fevers. Our GP dismissed it as normal and it was not reported. The doctors couldn't help and it took several years of personal research and reading that finally put it together. Mainstream medicine was consulted and they tried to say behaviour was partially Asperger's and partly psychotic?? Thousands of dollars have been spent on complementary health, some giving minor relief, some more significant and some none at all,

Mother (48), a trainer, with two daughters aged 16 and 14, both partially vaccinated.

Reaction of younger daughter to MMR at age one was reported to GP and paediatrician but they said it was unlikely to be MMR. No official report to government. I have met approx. 20 families over the years who say similar about non-reporting. This worries me because if we all know of up to 20 unreported reactions the statistics about vaccine safety are inaccurate and parents are being misled and conned. My daughter has autism, dyspraxia and has lost her speech. We have consulted numerous therapists. Natural therapies help when needed. Mainstream medicine worsens symptoms e.g. antibiotics cause worse gut problems. Medicines full of artificial colours and sweeteners keep her awake and reduce concentration etc. Inner health and magnesium help and homeopathy is great for her, not as effective for others in family but great for her.

A 34 year old mother employed in childcare with a daughter 11 and a four year old son, both partially vaccinated.

My son aged three days went limp, lifeless, wouldn't wake up, turned yellow and developed fevers after receiving the Hep B vaccination. He was admitted to hospital. Nobody knew what was wrong. They said he was jaundiced but his levels were fine but his condition didn't improve. Nothing was reported nor was the vaccine blamed. We were told our son was just a 'lazy baby'. He seemed to have permanent damage to his mouth/throat/tongue. He could no longer breast feed and drinking from a bottle was very messy as he couldn't latch or suck or swallow very well. My son's development was very delayed - eating, crawling, talking. He had difficulties with social outings or visitors. He couldn't handle change or being taken out, or having people touch, talk or look at him. At three years, he

was diagnosed with ASD.

Mother (50), the director of a child care centre, with two children aged 18 and 11. Only the eldest is vaccinated.

My eldest son was listed on the autism spectrum when he was six years old and vaccination was thought the probable cause. We saw doctors (*Names withheld*). During my son's vaccination visit as a baby in 1995, the doctor asked me if I wanted my diphtheria and tetanus booster. I agreed and for the next five years I lived in a fog with total mental and physical fatigue. The doctor said it was due to being a new mother. I fought my way out of this via vitamins & various supplements that I found for myself - in those days the Internet was not so widely used. I later traced the onset of my problem to this vaccination. I could cry at the memory of it.

Mother (42) who has worked in child care. Three children ranging from 15 to four years. The two youngest are unvaccinated.

My son at six months of age after vaccination developed high temperatures and rash all over chest and back for a couple of days. It was not reported. He suffered high temperatures and crying with all his vaccinations up to age of 12 months (then received no more). This child has since been diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome, ODD and ADHD. I have used complementary medicine for years and even hair mineral analysis results have shown an above normal level of heavy metals such as mercury in his system. All our health care is alternative where possible.

Mother (53), a Naturopath and Lecturer, with one fully vaccinated son aged 20.

My son had an adverse reaction to the MMR when 18 months old - floppy, swollen leg at site, feverish, etc. I believe he suffered some regression after that shot. He stopped making eye contact and was easily distracted. Later, when he was eight years old, he was diagnosed with ADD and depression by a Paediatric Consultant, who put him on anti-depressants and dexamphetamine. I was extremely loath to put him on these drugs and researched alternatives myself. I am now a naturopath and help other concerned families make informed choices. It is possible that my son was intellectually affected. His father is a Mensan, and I was the top graduate at my school and later at my college, but our son was not a high achiever at school. He has great difficulty participating in mathematics. He has gotten better over the years because he is now studying the thing he loves (music), but I would have thought he would have been more academic.

Mother (60) a teacher, with one vaccinated son now aged 21.

My mother told me I developed eczema and my older brother developed asthma straight after the smallpox vaccine that we had in Scotland when I was 19 months old and my brother 31 months old. This eczema and my brother's asthma plagued us into adulthood but diminished when we reached our 30s. Our eczema and my brother's asthma at the time were not associated with our reaction to the smallpox vaccine and were treated by doctors but not reported as vaccine reactions. I had a polio vaccine in my arm when I was about 11 in 1963 and I had to have a few days off school (a rare event) because it caused my legs to become very heavy and I couldn't walk properly for a few days. I did not see a doctor for this reaction. I just stayed in bed until my legs worked again and it was not reported to a doctor only my teacher through a note from my mother.

My son experienced a bad reaction to his first DPT at six months of age and this lasted for six weeks with irritability and poor eyed contact. He had high pitched screaming two hours after this vaccine. He developed a high fever of 39.6 for 40 hours which could not be reduced by Panadol. This reaction was reported to a doctor and the baby clinic in Queensland immediately. I don't know what they did with my complaint. The baby clinic told me it was a common reaction and he should not get the pertussis component of this DPT vaccine again so my son just had the DT vaccine at 17 months. (My son actually got pertussis when he was 18 in 2010 and he gave it to me. We both coughed for three months then got better. I was 58 at the time and had been a nurse in my younger years then a teacher and I have lived in UK, South Africa, USA and Australia and I had never seen a case of pertussis before this. So much for the effectiveness of pertussis vaccines).

He recovered from this then his next batch of vaccines was at 11 months which was polio, Hib B, Tetanus and Diphtheria (no pertussis was given due to previous bad reaction from DPT). He became irritable after this vaccine as well but recovered after a few weeks. At 17 months he had his MMR and polio on the one day and he rapidly regressed. At age two years seven months he was officially

diagnosed with developmental regression and then subsequently autism. I suspected the cause being the MMR straight away because he met all milestones early and he was strong and healthy baby who was walking independently at eight months one week and used 25 words by 17 months. Four days after the vaccine he started to bash his head against the wall then subsequently run around in circles then bash his head with all his toys and stopped playing appropriately with them. I reported my suspicion of the MMR causing my son's autism to doctors at the baby clinics in hospitals (*names withheld*) when I returned from America six months after my son had the MMR vaccine in USA. (I returned to Australia to get good medical treatment for him because we could see he was suffering from severe developmental regression after this vaccine and it was clear he was not getting any better). I don't know what the doctors at the (*Name withheld*) hospital here in Brisbane in 1993 did with my suggestion that my son spiralled into autism four days after his one and only MMR vaccine but they ran a lot of tests on him and couldn't find a reason for his regression and chromosome tests proved normal. An MRI showed some delayed myelin possibly from a form of encephalitis from his DPT vaccine or another vaccine such as Hib B or MMR. At 26 months in 1993 he got another Hib B vaccine and started acting very agitated again after this.

To this day he has never returned to being able to play, socialise or communicate appropriately and requires life long support because he can't do anything for himself. I believe the first DPT vaccine damaged the blood brain barrier and when the MMR came along it got through the blood brain barrier and caused chronic encephalitis like a variant of SSPE. He currently has gut issues and has lost a lot of weight and hair in the past two years and also has developed seborrheic dermatitis, helicobater pylori, esophagitis, gastritis and now some swollen joints on fingers. His healthy immune system he was born with has been compromised by vaccines resulting in his chronic illnesses and delayed development. I had to give up my job as a teacher to take care of him many years ago. Life is a constant struggle for us and he has such difficulty sleeping with constant involuntary muscle twitching preventing him from sleeping peacefully.

Mother (57) with two sons, now aged 22 and 20, both vaccinated. Healing Therapist, as well as a Mindd Foundation Representative.

Myself - polio vaccinations - vaccinated between 1955-60. This was one of the worst types of polio vaccinations in history. According to Medical Intuitives, after 55 years the vaccine still sits in my system throughout my legs, even though I had no polio disease. I have severe dyslexic learning disabilities.

My oldest son - fully vaccinated with the triple/polio/hib & Hep B up to age five. He had fever and crying through the night after each vaccination. He developed ODD (Oppositional Defiant Disorder) and brain deformities that left him severely disadvantaged in learning capabilities. It was not reported to a GP because I was unaware of the damage until he was older and it was too late as ODD does not show up until much later in a child's development. However, I took him to a natural pathologist to heal the gut, which was unsuccessful due to his defiant behaviour, and later to a brain specialist, which also was unsuccessful due to his defiant behaviour. He later resorted to drugs as his only way to cope with brain chaotic abnormalities. He also has a weak immune system, always getting colds.

My youngest son - fully vaccinated with the triple/polio/hib & Hep B to age three. After his first vaccinations at two months, he stopped breast feeding as he was unable to suck properly, even though he was perfect prior to his first vaccinations. After his first vaccinations, at two months, he started losing weight. After three months, he had a blocked bowel for 17 days. He was checked by GPs but they did not indicate that this might have been instigated by vaccinations, which at the time were the worst form of vaccinations in history given to children between 1990 and 2000. When he was three, I learned about the devastating effects of vaccinations, and immediately stopped all vaccinations with my sons. Later I learned of my son's deformities in speech, brain and the gut. At age 18, unbeknown to me, he was given the tetanus shot, which now has the 3 in 1 (diphtheria, whooping cough and tetanus). He regressed quite severely in speech and behaviour which nearly landed him in jail with a criminal record. Prior to the tetanus shot, he was speaking and functioning sufficiently to graduate from the Brisbane Trade College, with no behavioural problems. He is Aspergers/dyslexic/ with some autism. He was diagnosed with severe Auditory Processing Disability in Brisbane, and later by the Dyslexic Centre in Brisbane as severely dyslexic. He had severe speech, gut and learning disorders. He undertook the Tomatis Program for seven years with a Tomatis Practitioner, as well as had two long treatments with the natural pathologist to heal the gut. He also had two years with a speech pathologist. He also undertook a year in Brain Gym with a practitioner.

Over a few hundred thousand dollars of our funds to support him through countless programs and endless worthless schooling systems, he is now on his second year of apprenticeship. He still has severe speech disorders and because of this, he has no friends in his life. Keeping him alive is a full-time job. His only way to feel functional in life is to work non-stop.

All reactions of both children were reported to AVN many years ago, which I was informed would have been passed onto the government. It is a complete waste of time going to any GP to report any reaction because they would never admit that vaccinations are the cause of problems. From their point of view, they need to protect their jobs, which is far more important than saving the well being of any child. All the research I have investigated through natural paths, AVN, and the Mindd Foundation, where specialist (including some doctors) and scientists have provided clear evidence to show how vaccinations destroy the brain and immune system of the body, has shown without doubt, both of my children, including myself have been severely damaged by vaccinations. None of these disorders existed in my parents or their parents, on both sides.

Asthma, allergies, immunity issues, ear infections

Mother (40) who worked for a wholesale travel company and is a student of kinesiology with one son born 2005.

I was pregnant and being bombarded with information about vaccination. Luckily my sister spoke with me about the idea of not vaccinating and suggested viewing your website for more information and researching the issue further. Unfortunately, I was pressured by my son's father and his side of the family who are doctors and surgeons and so my son was vaccinated. My child suffered fever and irritability and cried most of the night after his childhood vaccinations. He then suffered from eczema until I brought it under control with diet. I managed to avoid the four year old vaccinations until earlier this year when his father went against court orders and took him to be immunised. For the past six months he has been extremely sick with a drastically weaker immune system than previously.

A 56 year old mother who has worked as a family violence worker, hypnotherapist and yoga teacher.

When we were talking as adults, my mother said that I changed straight after the four month vaccine shot. She said I was a happy healthy baby and then I just changed over night and didn't like being held much or drinking and I became quite different. I started getting severe ear infections and tonsillitis, was often sick and weak with stomach aches. Still have trouble with my stomach a lot. I have chronic fatigue, now labelled as fibromyalgia.

Mother (65) who has worked in natural health for the last 32 years. Three children who are now 41, 38 and 37.

My daughter had eczema after her first and only vaccine and she broke out terribly with rash over her whole body. Then she had allergies until her 30s. She developed gastroenteritis as well and the GP said never to vaccinate her again and gave me a letter to say this for travel etc. Then my second child, a boy, had his three month vaccine and broke out in eczema and white blotches. The same doctor said not to vaccinate and wrote a letter for me, When my third child, a son, was born I did not vaccinate him at all. We went to live in China in a village for a couple of years but my children never got sick. They played in the streets and fell into sewers. It was awful. However they never got sick from this. I think it was natural inoculation.

My daughter suffered years of allergies. Her hair fell out and it went very weak and fine. It took two years to grow hair after her one and only vaccine but then she nearly died from the GIE which went on for two months. She has always been tired even as a small girl. She is tired till this day as a young 41 year old mum about to have her second child. She is better than when she was when young. She still has fine thin hair but she is over the allergies now thank goodness but is very sensitive to things, especially chemicals.

Mother (43) of two children, a son aged 12 and a daughter six years, who has worked as an author, editor, mentor and teacher. The daughter is unvaccinated.

My son had all vaccinations up to and not including the MMR. The reactions were always the same.

He became feverish, sick, rashes and swelling appeared. I took him to my GP on all occasions who confirmed they were caused by vaccines and on one occasion they were reported. My son was a sickly child with constant ear and throat infections. He spent his first birthday in hospital with a severe pneumococcal infection and burst eardrum. He had his tonsils and adenoids out at three and they grew back again, thus having them out again at age eight. I had no idea at the time about adverse reactions to vaccinations and when I asked my GPs what was actually in them they did not know and treated me with contempt for even questioning. That's when I did my own medical research and found enough evidence to satisfy me that vaccinations were harmful and potentially life threatening. I came to the conclusion that the risks far outweighed the positives. I have been discriminated against by Government agencies, day cares and schools but I can see the difference in the health in my two children, one who was vaccinated and the other who was not and has never been sick. What more can I say?

Mother (37) who is a retired laboratory technician. Four children ranging from 12 to two years. The youngest is unvaccinated.

Our first son reacted badly to the MMR vaccine and after seeing many doctors, we finally found the answer when a doctor (*name withheld*) confirmed it was the vaccine causing his leaky gut. Then we did even more research and were stunned when we found the truth about vaccines. Our son still has auditory processing disorder and can't eat certain foods because of his food sensitivity.

Mother (57) who is a naturopath in the clinic at a country hospital. Three children aged 26, 23 and 13, the youngest not being vaccinated

Sudden asthma attacks needing emergency treatment and admission to hospital. Prescription drugs were ordered. Emotional health ran parallel to physical exacerbations. This was for my first born at age five on admission to school. GP did not report to ADRAC. Naturopathic treatment decreased the severity of the asthma attacks as a young boy. The imbalance in the immune modulation capacity of my son remains with resultant issues of increased sensitivity to allergens such as animal hair, dust, dairy products. His inability to participate in sport affected his social links and ability to feel like one of the crowd.

Mother (51), a school counsellor, with one son aged nine years

I allowed my son to have the two month old vaccine combination when he was four years old (felt it would be safer than two months!!!). Did it due to family pressure and pressure from friends as he was starting a pre-school program. My son became sick after it for six months. He had symptoms of almost every disease in the immunisation - including pertussis, varicella, pneumococcal, Hib etc . It was like he had been infected with everything all at once as a result of the vaccine!!! Ever since, he has been prone to allergies and chest infections. He has allergies and asthma like symptoms at certain times of the year which he did not have before the vaccine in July 2007. He misses time off school due to sickness. I have had him taken off me by the courts at times due to my reluctance to give him mainstream medications i.e. antibiotics. Even my own doctor went against me and quoted my reluctance to use antibiotics - despite having posters in the surgery about not expecting every viral infection to be treated with antibiotics. It contributed to losing my son to my ex husband and when I got him back (years later) recently he was totally addicted to fast foods and refusing to take natural medicines.

Mother (57) with 11 children ranging from 33 years downwards. The first six children are vaccinated and the other five are not. Mother is a part time kinesiologist.

Daughter now aged 24 and the fourth eldest child - anaphylaxis reaction at two months after DPT - spent three hours in hospital where she was only 'observed' with nothing being said and no-one seeming to know what to do, while I held her. When she became a little pinker after stirring enough to take a feed, I was sent home - nothing was said about cause, prognosis or anything. She did not come back to her normal self for a week, being very lethargic and rag-doll like. When I next visited the doctor, he said it was probably a reaction to the whooping cough part of the vaccine and to request that that be left out of her next vaccination. Unfortunately, that's what I did, not realising the general danger of all vaccines. I doubt if the reaction was reported. She became hypoactive and very sensitive to foods and colourings. Twins are one year younger and were wheat and dairy intolerant and needed a special diet as toddlers. First six children had problems with bedwetting beyond the

normal years. The last five had no problems.

Mother (58) with two daughters now aged 19 and 16. Only the eldest is vaccinated. Mother has worked as a bank officer, office worker, secretary and receptionist.

Eldest daughter, at two, four & six months - DPT, polio. (can't remember the others - the usual, at the time). The four month shots brought on unnatural, high-pitched screaming for the entire day. Could not be consoled. 14 days later: severe eczema. Later, 'off the scale' allergies as described by a natural doctor. Further down the track, anaphylaxis reaction to fish. Was seen by the community nurse at the time.. She dismissed the reactions and referred to them as completely normal. As far as I know, not reported to the government. Long-term, it has cost heaps of money (many, many thousands) trying to understand what happened, and trying to remedy the problem, and fix it up. Today, as long as she keeps away from a number of foods, her immunity is not compromised so much. Still the serious problem with fish, though. And she has trouble with energy, periods, sleeping, stress, even though she is on an excellent diet. The younger daughter, who has not been vaccinated, is robust and healthy and strong.

Mother (43), an administration assistant, with six children aged from 14 to two years. Only the eldest is vaccinated.

I was vaccinated for Rubella at 11 years. I was an 'A' student and within a week of the vaccination, I was a B and C student. My parents wondered why but no-one could give an answer. My eldest, a son, was vaccinated up until two years. He is now 14, still wets the bed, has a huge intolerance to wheat (none of the family does) and gets ill far more often than his siblings. We have been to many specialists and given him many treatments and none work. It is not confirmed that it is the vaccines.

Other long-term effects

Father (53) with two sons aged 16 and 15. Only the eldest is vaccinated.

Son born 1996. Within a couple of days when he was a few months old - floppy state and turned a blue colour after DTP. Was seen by a GP. One hospital doctor has agreed my son's problems were caused by the vaccines. Not sure if GP reported reactions to the government. He now has very poor eye vision with cataracts in both eyes.

Mother with a background as a Business Analyst in IT.

Daughter born 2004 was vaccinated against my wishes by her father when she was visiting him. She contracted a skin disease which looked like ring worm. The GPs kept diagnosing her with ring worm after six months! Finally, a dermatologist diagnosed her properly from a blood test. Plus, the test showed her being deficient in Vit D. After a couple of months, I wanted the GP to request another blood test to check for the skin disease and her Vit D deficiency, but he was very rude saying he could see from her skin she was 'cured'. As the GP did not diagnose her properly the first time, I was offended from his comment. It showed his ignorance. After a year, my daughter's skin finally cleared. She was given the Hep B which I believe caused the skin disorder. No, I did not report this reaction as I was trying to find out how my ex-husband had the right to do this. Unfortunately, the Council only needs one signature from a parent which I find outrageous. Second, I was trying to find out how to protect my daughter from the onslaught of toxins. So, I did not even give it a thought to report her reaction.

A mother – family details not divulged.

My then 20 month old son had his 'shots' as per the schedule. I then hopelessly watched as he spent the evening screaming in what can only be described as agony. That eventually stopped and was then replaced with two days of a very limp child who did not walk or talk for two or three days. He eventually improved but was not the same vibrant, inquisitive little boy that he was before those shots. This led to my questioning and researching vaccination.

Mother aged 30 who has worked in education. Three sons aged six, four and two, and a newly born daughter. Only the eldest child is vaccinated.

Our eldest boy (born 2006) had fevers, rashes, breathing difficulties, flu symptoms and vomiting. We took him to a doctor after the vomiting and nothing was done so we stopped vaccinating. The doctor said they were all coincidental symptoms. My husband's reaction was constant ear infections that started as a child only after he was vaccinated.

A 35 year old mother of three (daughters aged nine and four, and a seven year old son) who has worked in administration. The younger daughter is unvaccinated.

My son had a mild seizure which was denied by the doctor as being a reaction to the vaccine. It was not reported to any government authority. I believe this reaction is now the cause of his very poor vision making him dyslexic. It was after his six month needles. I have consulted many medical professions but have received the greatest help from a well trained homeopath.

A 37 year old mother (Yoga teacher) with a partially vaccinated daughter aged five and an unvaccinated son aged one.

Myself - developed whooping cough shortly after the vaccine. My daughter had the first two vaccines at four and six months after my husband (now ex) insisted. Both times her leg swelled and was red at the site of the vaccination and she screamed for six hours. After the first vaccine, the GP convinced me that this was a normal reaction, which I didn't believe. After the second time, I went full ball into research and found a paediatrician who agreed it was a bad reaction and to never subject her to vaccinations again, or any siblings. I also contacted the AVN at the time and you were very helpful. The GP disagreed but continues to have our family as patients. Nothing was reported.

Father (71) with seven children ranging from 46 to 38. He has been a teacher and a minister of religion. All family members have been vaccinated.

Our son, at four months of age, had triple antigen; febrile convulsions, high temperature, crying, not seen by a doctor; no confirmation, no reporting. He suffers minimal brain damage (mild degree of spasticity) which continues. Complementary health providers have been consulted and have offered more support than the medical profession.

Mother (54) who has worked as an editor and a stock broker. Four children ranging from 23 to 17 years. The two youngest are unvaccinated.

My son had high-pitched screaming, a high fever and developed sleep apnoea after his first vaccinations at two months of age. His immune system was severely suppressed and he was constantly sick and on antibiotics. After he received the MMR vaccine at 18 months, he was hospitalised. The hospital said they believed he had gastroenteritis but I believe, after doing a great deal of research, that he had encephalitis and both his behaviour and his growth were affected after this time. He was diagnosed with failure to thrive and gained no weight at all for 18 months and stopped growing completely. Even today, though he works hard at being healthy, he is very small for his age and has an immune system which allows him to get sick when others who might be stronger would have more resistance. He was on antibiotics for months at a time without any benefit. It was not until we discovered natural therapies (anthroposophic care, homeopathy and naturopathy) that we finally turned a corner and he started to improve but it has been a very long haul of many years to get him back to some semblance of health.

Mother (54) who is a Kinesiologist. Three children between 23 and 19, all vaccinated.

The eldest child had triple antigen at two months. Moaned for four hours without stopping, as if he had a headache. He had never done this before or since. Reported to the doctor as I was concerned about subsequent injections, and was told it was nothing, as the baby wasn't convulsing. So I presume this didn't get reported. He was smiling at five weeks of age and he had delayed development for every other milestone. The youngest had MMR at four years. Caused an asthma attack. He was sick for a week. I only consented to this because of the possibility of being excluded from school. He missed more school because of the reaction.

The eldest now has allergies, gut problems, developmental delay, retained primitive reflexes and social and learning problems. He walks on his toes. The second child has allergies, some retained primitive reflexes. some learning problems and eczema. The youngest has asthma, eczema. walks on toes, is a fussy picky eater with some retained primitive reflexes. We have done Behavioural Optometry, Chiropractic (Primitive reflex Inhibition), Samonas Sound Therapy Occupational

therapy, Paediatric Physiotherapy, Vaga Testing, Skin Prick Allergy Testing, Naturopathy, Homeopathy, Biofeedback, Neurofeedback, Speech Therapy, Kinesiology (N.O.T.), (LEAP). Auditory Integration Therapy. I may have missed a couple. My children have all completed school. My oldest son was struggling with school by year two, and I doubted whether I could keep him in the school system. Thank god I got his eyes tested with (*Name withheld*). This opened up a whole range of wonderful and supportive practitioners.

Mother (41) who has worked as an investigator. Two children aged six and four years, both partially vaccinated.

Eldest child at two and a half years had the vaccine for rotavirus. My very, very regular (bowels) child became very irregular straight after the vaccination for a period of weeks - even stopped all motions for a period of time. I had him checked by a GP, but I was told it had nothing to do with it. I also mentioned it to the nurse - she basically said that it was rubbish and couldn't happen. Not reported. Bowels returned to normal after an extended period. I didn't take the matter any further - other than starting to research vaccination more thoroughly and deciding not to vaccinate my children anymore!!! There have been a lot of issues with that vaccine - for the rotavirus.

Father (72) with a background as a marine navigator. Three children now 45, 43 and 40, all fully or partially vaccinated.

Our infant son age six months (I think) - violent fever soon after the vaccination, rushed to GP then directly to hospital. The reaction was almost immediate after the vaccination. In hospital, he was listed as having pneumonia, which it patently wasn't.

Mother (42) with three children aged eight, six and three. Only the eldest is vaccinated. Research associate for ADHD research (Yes, lots of 'febrile seizures' in those kids' files that I now know were vaccine reactions - almost always at age four months, six months, and 18 months!).

I had joint pain and tendonitis requiring physiotherapy (thought it was repetitive work injury!!) after MMR booster age 28. Flu after flu vaccine age 30.

Eldest child had vaccine reaction at age two months. Puffy face, chronic green slimy diarrhoea, later on, loose stools and totally undigested food (first solid stool at age four and a half after partial healing). Infancy: Constant crying seemed something inside her head and belly was hurting. Head dropped down, 'sleeping' for three to five seconds and now I believe these were head drop seizures. Late to sit, late to walk, did not grasp or play with toys. Holding her was somewhat of a comfort and I became a baby wearing expert, holding her all day while she just whimpered, but putting her down things got 10 times as bad. Never belly crawled. Taught her to creep on all fours at nearly 11 months of age. As a toddler, OCD like symptoms, age three started facial and vocal tics ('mommy-yuh yuh yuh' while face grimaced), 'stereotypical movements' of her shoulders. Fell down a lot all her life, up to age four. Serious fatigue up to age five and a half. Tantrums that went for hours, starting 14 months to age three and a half when we started healing process. She also seemed to have a proprioception problem. Walking into walls, leaning down into open drawers, etc even though very careful inhibited person generally. Sensory problems: oversensitive to noise and heat (bathwater needed to be cool/tepid!) OCD like fears (black fuzz in bathtub was a serious concern up to age three and a half). I did not recognize it as such for a very long time, but because so many doctors told me her incessant crying was my fault, I never found a doctor to resume the vaccination schedule. Now nearly age nine and still not a fluent reader, very laboured and painful for her to read. Her math skills are fine, and she is very right brained and creative/artistic. She has speech difficulties with 'R'. Bad headaches and backaches age six to seven and a half. Did a lot of things in this order....chiropractic, TCM acupuncture, physiotherapy/massage, Craniosacral therapy, all have helped and as of the past six months all those have been a lot better. The TCM and physiotherapy helped a lot, then going to CST regularly got her feeling much better. Now, no headaches and only a little back achiness at times. In the meantime, I heard other parents' stories that were eerily like my own; green diarrhoea, screaming in pain, waking up screaming, sleep disruptions, serious reflux and vomiting for months, 'head drop' seizures I had thought were from sleepiness/exhaustion....well, I decided to delay. Then as time went on I got more and more educated and realized my now toddler's PDD NOS was stemming from the vaccine damage. Fixed her diet, gave her probiotics, GF/CF diet, and vitamins and she got so much better quickly that I decided to learn more. Healed her totally in two full years. By age five and a half she had no diagnosis except the IgA deficiency (which also later got healed,

somehow) and was starting ballet. Today she has issues from early stressful life, but 95% normal. We never vaccinated anyone in our family again. We subsequently had two more children and they are 100% unvaccinated. Our daughter with Down syndrome is the third child, they are said to have poor immune systems and definitely get vaccinated. Well, I know they are also very susceptible to cellular and brain damage. She has been on DS supplements and a very clean non toxic lifestyle (as good as we can make it, in Beijing, organic, nontoxic household and personal care products, good non BPA water and most importantly no medicines or vaccines). She is nearly four and talking, learning, singing songs....doing GREAT!

Vaccinations with older persons

Wife (59) who has worked as an administration officer and bookkeeper. No children.

At 43 years of age, I had a tetanus combo due to a swollen foot. The vaccine brought my CFS symptoms of fatigue and severe fibromyalgia. This lasted for years and still to this day. I am now 59 years old. The symptoms have been helped with a healthy lifestyle to some extent. I was seen by a GP but reaction was not reported. They have no idea!

Mother (58), a business consultant, with one partially vaccinated child who is now 24. A son is deceased.

My son died of Hodgkin's Lymphoma when he was 24 years old (born 1982). My alternative GP said he was the type of child that should never have been vaccinated and that it would have been a contributing factor.

Mother (39), a graphic artist, with one unvaccinated child aged five years

I was vaccinated for measles, not sure of exact age but under 10 I assume. Came down with severe case of measles, worst case the doctor had ever seen. Mum reported it to the local council who were doing the vaccinations at the time and they told her it must have just been a bad batch.

A 28 year old mother, a naturopath, with an unvaccinated daughter born in 2012.

I developed fever, headaches, muscle aches and exhaustion after all childhood vaccinations. Saw GP after first few reactions. They were confirmed as being caused by vaccine but not further reported. From age 12, I would develop localized swelling after all vaccinations e.g. Hep B, tetanus. The affected arm would be swollen, itchy, achy, numb, and tingly for up to two weeks following vaccination. Reaction confirmed by GP to have been caused by vaccine but was not further reported. Husband developed dermatitis after a DTP vaccination in 2005. Was reported to GP, who denied link to vaccine and it was not further reported. He still suffers from dermatitis. Both mainstream and complementary health practitioners have been consulted. Mainstream practitioners deny the link.

Mother (34) who is a primary school teacher. Two children aged three and two years, the younger one not being vaccinated.

At 34 years of age I had a whooping cough vaccine. I lost strength in my arms and legs to the point where it was difficult or not possible to climb stairs, get up off the ground, lift my children up, shower myself, dress myself, toilet myself, hold a coffee mug, open doors etc etc etc. I was hospitalised and diagnosed with CIDP (Chronic inflammatory polyneuropathy), a form of demyelination that attacks the myelin around my nerves. I was seen by two GPs and several neurologists. It was recorded that I had a booster vaccine three years prior to this but never confirmed as the cause of my condition, so it wasn't reported to the Government. My son received his vaccines at six weeks of age and was put in hospital a week later with RSV/bronchiolitis. Doctors say it was a coincidence and so it was not reported as an adverse reaction to a vaccine either.

My CIDP condition is chronic. I have to have transfusions once a month to treat my symptoms so that I can live as normal a life as possible. I still have no reflexes, cannot run or jump, have trouble lifting things over 10 kilograms and walking up stairs. It affects my work, my emotional and physical well being and has caused a major strain on me psychologically. I regularly have deep tissue massage and acupuncture in the hope that it will assist my body to cope with the extra physical stress and I see a naturopath to assist me with my diet and lifestyle choices, again to enable me to do what I can from

my end to help my body heal itself!! I am awaiting an appointment to see a very expensive medical doctor in Brisbane who 'Treats the Cause' so that perhaps he can discover the true cause and help me treat it - not just the symptoms!

Mother (69) who worked in general nursing and as a midwifery childbirth educator. Three children now aged 38, 37 and 34, all unvaccinated.

I was vaccinated age 18 during Preliminary Training School at (*Name withheld*) Hospital. Many vaccinations - tetanus, typhoid, BCG, cholera. I developed respiratory tract infection which then progressed to chronic rhinitis and severe acne. There was never any mention of a connection to vaccinations. I was given antibiotics, antihistamines and X-Ray therapy to my face. I suffered many years of rhinitis, asthma, food intolerance, environmental sensitivities, and chronic fatigue syndrome and skin rashes. Thanks to fasting and many years of strict dietary regime and homoeopathic treatment my health improved. I have not had any conventional medical treatment for forty-five years. Our three children have not had any vaccinations or antibiotics.

Mother (37), a teacher, with four children ranging from 13 to six years of age. Only the two eldest have been vaccinated.

When I was 27 (10 years ago) I received a MMR vaccination. I was given a fact sheet with the possible side effects and the range of days in which these could occur. I experienced all bar one of the side effects within a week of the vaccine. I told the GP who was adamant it was a coincidence. I then spent the next two months in bed with 'post viral fatigue', according to the GP. I was sure that it was my body's immune system under stress from the vaccine. I was angry - if getting almost all the side effects listed on the vaccine brochure didn't count, then when would a doctor agree that there was an adverse reaction?

Mother (43), a business manager, with two unvaccinated children aged eight and six.

At 17 years old I had the Hep B vaccinations and about three days after the first shot got my very first migraine which I have continued to have to this day. I had an adverse reaction to travel vaccinations when I was 22 years old - I was given a range of vaccinations but they thought it was most likely the typhoid vaccine that caused it - I was so ill that they thought I was going to die - severe gastro with hospitalisation about 12 hours after the vaccine. I also was very sick as a child and teenager that I attribute to vaccinations.

Wife (47) who works in music education. No children.

My husband had a severe reaction to a vaccine that he had to have for work. It is a vaccine given to people who work with bats - the virus is the Lyssavirus virus (similar to Rabies virus). I don't know the name of the vaccine. It was given in three doses. He reacted severely to the second dose. His GP told him to expect a reaction and advised him not to have it as it was a waste of time (as he would have to have the vaccine if he was ever bitten by a bat) but his work said that he had to. His GP confirmed that it was a reaction to the vaccine. He believes that his GP would have reported the reaction but doesn't know this for certain.

Appendix C: Comments about risks and benefits of vaccines and other aspects

Risks of vaccines – 71 people made comments about the risks associated with vaccines. Some example comments are:

- I have not seen or heard of anything that I deem to be a “benefit.”
- Drug companies have had to pay compensation to injured children overseas, so the harm has been legally established.
- I am very disturbed to see that they are still giving Gardasil in schools despite the very large number of bad reactions.
- If you do choose to vaccinate your child and they have an adverse reaction, the doctors are unlikely to agree it was the vaccine that caused the reaction. Some parents in the US have been jailed wrongly for causing damage to their children.
- Parents should do more research about the pros and cons on vaccinations instead of just having a herd mentality and following society. There are just too many vaccinations and kids seem to be sicker nowadays than before.
- The incidence of ADD and autism has increased with increased use of vaccinations. When I went to school (I am now 72), children had few allergies, and no ADD or autism.
- There is an increased risk of brain inflammation which could lead to learning problems, behavioural issues and autism. The medical profession has not adequately researched the impact of vaccines on the brains of children.
- They tell us how many diseases have been eradicated due to vaccines, but the children’s hospitals are bursting at the seams with childhood cancer!

Reporting of childhood reactions – three people commented.

- I am also extremely concerned about the lack of reporting of adverse reactions.
- Completely independent adverse reporting mechanism needs to be established with non connected health care providers reviewing cases, to establish if a reaction is possibly linked to a vaccine. Too often it is just dismissed as the practitioner is connected to the case and fears litigation.
- Unreported reactions to vaccinations are HUGE! The 'smaller' reactions like a child crying, unsettled and unwell for days etc are common to hear in general talk among parents but even the more dangerous reactions are going unreported! I had a parent friend take their child to the doctor as the child had become limp post vaccination only to be sent home as this was ok!!

Need for more information for parents – 40 commented on this aspect. Some selected comments:

- Soooo much misinformation out there!
- Schools both private and public need more information - they are simply pushing out the government and pharmaceutical company rubbish without providing a balanced view.
- Both my children (20 and 17) have not received any vaccines. My son is travelling to Ecuador next year and there is a big list of vaccines he should have before travelling. I find myself going through the same quandary as when they were babies on whether to vaccinate or not and am quite concerned. I am hoping to be able to read lots of information on this subject.
- People need to be made aware of how many of the so called 'epidemics' of whooping cough etc. are actually in vaccinated children. Media is constantly misleading or misinforming of this fact.
- The manufacturers’ inserts should be made available to the parents before the shot so true informed consent can take place. Having to wrestle it from the nurses in the clinic is stupid.
- I like to know all aspects of an issue before making an informed decision and vaccination is no different. The idea that the government or a faceless internet 'Skeptic' group could presume to prevent me from obtaining a range of information and views is outrageous. I am entitled to an informed opinion - it is my democratic right. And we do live in a democracy....don't we?
- Parents need to be made more aware of the ingredients of vaccines and the effects each ingredient can have on a child's body and health. There are still a lot of parents blindly vaccinating their children because they don't know they have the choice.

Comparison of health of vaccinated and unvaccinated children – 13 people commented. Example comments:

- Children who have not been vaccinated have a higher IQ.

- I have eight grandchildren and two have been fully vaccinated. They are the two that have health problems. One is anaphylactic and the other has Asperger's.
- Most of our community came down with whooping cough recently. They were all vaccinated before and most again after this epidemic. Most of the children in one small country school caught chicken pox. All were vaccinated. Our child did not catch it.
- My children, four and eight, are not vaccinated. They rarely get sick and if they do it is very mild i.e.; sore tummy when their friends have severe gastro, slight snuffle for a day or two when their friends develop severe LRTI's or URTI's.
- Vaccinated children are getting sicker and allergic a lot earlier than they used to. I work in childcare and I get children at the age of nine months with eczema and allergies to eggs, dairy, etc. Asthma seems to be the worst in very young children.
- It is lovely to treat unvaccinated children when using kinesiology techniques - there is a huge difference in their health and vitality and alertness.

Upholding the right of free choice – 38 people commented. All supported free choice. Example comments:

- I don't think there is a right/wrong choice. I think both choices, to vaccinate or not to vaccinate, should be respected.
- It should never be made compulsory, not in a democracy or anywhere for that matter.
- Legislation should never be used to force any medical procedure onto the public, including vaccination.
- Parents and/or the primary caregiver should have the final say in this matter as they are the ones who have invested their lives in the well being of the child and will spend the rest of their lives answering as to why they did or did not vaccinate.
- Vaccination should never be compulsory, or used to discriminate against parents. It is an individual's choice.

Criticism of the medical profession, the government, drug companies and the media – 72 people made comments about this. Example comments are:

- The perceived benefits are pushed by those who stand to profit greatly.
- I don't believe financial incentives should be placed on medical procedures.
- A doctor told me he did not take the annual flu shot and neither did his family, and yet he promotes it to his patients.
- Doctors clearly have not even read the package inserts for the vaccines they so strongly recommend!
- Doctors need to be held accountable if adverse reactions to vaccination occur. They need to be openly accountable to the public if they receive any benefits or gifts etc from drug companies.
- Fear is the driving force of vaccination. I do not trust GPs any more even though I am a nurse and still work in the hospital system.
- Pharmaceutical companies together with governments continue to use "fear" tactics to induce people to vaccinate their children without all parents being made fully aware of the risks, side effects and contents of conventional vaccines.
- The media are very irresponsible and totally ignorant with what they present, and they only present one side of any health issue if it goes along with the medical profession.
- There should be open access to information from both sides of the discussion and it should be freely available from both doctors and other health care professionals. Drug companies and the people who make decisions in those companies should be held responsible.
- The attitude of the medical profession is appalling.

Pro-vaccination views – seven people expressed what could be considered some level of support for vaccination.

- I am particularly concerned about what I consider will be an epidemic of childhood diseases (mumps, measles) in about 20 years time when today's children will forget to keep their vaccinations up-to-date!
- Vaccination saves lives.
- May be beneficial in third world countries but not in well developed countries such as Australia.
- People travelling to problem areas where certain diseases are prevalent can benefit from vaccines.

- The risks of vaccines are overstated, the benefits are overwhelming, there is no real debate. You are so wrong, and so dangerous, and so stupid.
- Benefits - you can blame someone else if things go wrong. Less isolation, you are more accepted among other mothers who usually feel threatened by the knowledge of mums who do not vaccinate.

Need for more research – 14 people mentioned this. Some comments:

- There is a great need for better, unbiased, scientifically based research on the risks of vaccination.
- Vaccines should be tested by independent third parties, not pharmaceutical companies. Prosecution of companies found to be negligent should be stricter.
- Is there a study that shows the safety and efficacy of all the vaccination shots combined?
- I wonder if there are any studies looking into the impacts etc of the age when vaccines are given? Is there benefit in waiting until the little bodies are older, more developed and more able to deal with a vaccine? The deaths and reactions of high school girls to the cervical cancer vaccine maybe suggest that the safety issue does not diminish with age?
- The testing of vaccinated and unvaccinated children is a good idea.
- I believe that no proper longitudinal studies have been done on vaccination. I think that when the studies were done on sudden infant death syndrome, vaccination was not included as one of the parameters of study. I therefore believe the study was severely flawed.
- Why can't we link the Medicare claims of the vaccinated and unvaccinated to see who really is sicker?
- It would also be good to see some research about why one vaccine dose fits all sizes. It's interesting that something as supposedly simple as Panadol and cough syrups have different dosages based on age/weight yet that does not apply to vaccines.
- I'm very interested to see how the research goes in making vaccines that come in a skin patch.

Issues for non vaccinating parents – 16 people made comments about this issue.

- You are damned if you do and you are damned if you don't.
- I don't know where to begin. I just wish my decision could be respected and accepted. Surely people should have the right to choose.
- It would be nice to have knowledge of others in Darwin who have chosen not to vaccinate - feel all alone in the issue sometimes. For example, I have only ever met one person up here who hasn't vaccinated her children and she is my naturopath. My sister doesn't but she has moved away now.
- It's a very emotional subject that is supported by some very high powered, knowledgeable public figures that I admire. I really struggle with this concept. This makes it complicated and confronting when making an informed decision to vaccinate or not. Now that I have delved into this subject, I'm finding that I am not willing to speak openly/publically for fear of retaliation.
- I think the issue of herd immunity has really contributed to some of the resentment towards people who don't vaccinate because parents mistakenly believe their child is being placed at risk by non-vaccinated children.
- I've lost a couple of friends because my son wasn't vaccinated and when they had their babies, my son was no longer allowed to visit until their babies were fully vaccinated. Hence the friendship is over.
- Despite knowing that a lot of the information we have been given is a lie, and that vaccinations aren't what they are made out to be, I still struggle with my decision nearly everyday, especially if the kids get sick and even more so if they need to go to hospital. I hate being made to feel like an incompetent parent who doesn't deserve to have kids.
- I believe all parents ultimately want the best for their children. I find it upsetting that it seems impossible to share information and attempt debate and discussion without being ridiculed and attacked.
- I most certainly do not criticise my friends for vaccinating their children. However, vaccinated folk appear to believe people like me are fair game which is really wrong. My response to them is to ask how much research they have done and do they know all of the ingredients they are injecting into their child. This generally stops them dead in their tracks.
- I feel for my daughters who have young children. One has chosen not to vaccinate at all, she gets pressure from doctors, friends and family members to vaccinate and has even been verbally abused for being "irresponsible" even though she spent months of intense research on the issue after her hospitalisation.

- I am very fearful of bringing this subject up even with people I know well. I would love to let all the girls that I teach know about the dangers of Gardasil - but am constantly worried about their parents' reaction.

Feedback on the work of the AVN – 46 people commented. Individual comments are not reported here. However, there was universal support and appreciation expressed towards the AVN, particularly to the outgoing president of the organisation.



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