

SOUND SCIENCE ? CONSISTENT MESSAGES ?

The Flu ... a "Severe Illness"?

"Influenza (often called the flu) is not just a bad cold. It's a serious illness that can lead to pneumonia and even death." (CDC Website)

"And keep in mind, most people with flu will have an annoying illness but will recover just fine." (Dr. Julie Gerberding, Director of the CDC)

Antivirals – a good idea?

"Influenza antiviral medications are an important adjunct to influenza vaccine in the prevention and treatment of influenza." (CDC Website, "Information for Health Care Professionals")

"There is really scant-to-no evidence that antiviral drugs for influenza prevent death or other serious complications in patients who are infected." (CDC Report, 2004)

36,000 Flu Deaths Every Year?

"1968-69, 'Hong Kong flu,' [A (H3N2)], caused about 34,000 deaths in the United States." (CDC Website, "Influenza Pandemics During the 20th Century")

"An average of 36,000 people die each year from the flu" (CDC Website)

Predictable Flu Seasons?

"Early Evidence Suggests Current Flu Season Could be Severe" (CDC Press Release, Nov 17, 2003)

"Influenza seasons are unpredictable. Although epidemics of influenza occur virtually all every year, the particular viruses and the beginning, peak, severity, and length of the epidemic can vary widely from year to year." (Dr. Julie Gerberding, testimony to Congress, Nov 18, 2004)

2003-04: A "Severe" Season?

"This is the time for Americans to really step up to the plate and get vaccinated against influenza, especially because this could be a worse-than-usual flu season." (Dr. Julie Gerberding, Director of the CDC, NPR: *All Things Considered*, December 23, 2003)

"The aspect of the season that is relatively clear is that it was medium in terms of overall impact" (CDC influenza expert Keiji Fukuda, Feb 23, 2004)

Flu Shots – the best protection?

"The single best way to prevent the flu is to get vaccinated each fall." (CDC Website)

"... we recorded no convincing evidence that vaccines can reduce mortality, admissions, serious complications, and community transmission of influenza." ("Assessment of the efficacy and effectiveness of influenza vaccines in healthy children: systematic review," *The Lancet* 2005; 365: 773-80)

Meager Profits?

"Vaccine makers can not guarantee enough future supplies of flu vaccines unless the government can help ensure profitability, drug company officials told U.S. Congress on Thursday." (*Reuters*, 12 February 2004)

"We see the vaccine market as being a profitable piece of our business, and we see it as continuing to grow" (Philip Hosbach, vice president for new products and immunization policy, Sanofi Pasteur, the vaccine division of Sanofi-Aventis., *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, April 11, 2005)

"Sales of our flu vaccines were \$332.4 million, \$90.0 million and \$74.7 million in 2003, 2002 and 2001, respectively." "Vaccines gross profit as a percentage of net product sales was 53% [in 2003]..." (Chiron Annual Report, 2004)

... or Guaranteed Profits?

"A contract for additional doses shall provide that the manufacturer will be compensated by the Secretary [via CDC] at an equitable rate negotiated by the Secretary and the manufacturer for any doses that-- '(A) were not sold by the manufacturer through routine market mechanisms at the end of the influenza season for that year;" ("Flu Protection Act of 2005," S. 375, HR 813)

Just Who's Serving Whom?

"We must continue and strengthen our promotional efforts to educate the public about the importance of routine influenza immunization to create the demand to vaccinate high-risk individuals, alleviate surges in demand, and develop a consistent market so manufacturers can better gauge vaccine supply." (Dr. Julie Gerberding, Director of the CDC, testimony to Congress, February 12, 2004)

"At that point, the manufacturers were telling us that they weren't receiving a lot of orders for vaccine for use in November or even December. It really did look like we needed to do something to encourage people to get a flu shot." (Dr. Glen Nowak, Media Relations, CDC, NPR: *All Things Considered*, December 23, 2003)

Will you do it for a pizza?

"Healthcare workers owe it to their patients, their families, and to themselves to be vaccinated. No excuses. ... Monitoring and reporting vaccination rates could be used to create friendly competition between various units in the facility. You could even provide an incentive to the unit with the highest vaccination rate. If workers won't be vaccinated to protect themselves and their patients, they might do it for a pizza."

("Immunization Update 2004," CDC, August 19, 2004)

SOURCES

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"Influenza (often called the flu) ..." (CDC Website, <<http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/tcyd/vaccin.htm>>. Retrieved 20 April 2005.)

"And keep in mind, most people ..." (Dr. Julie Gerberding, Public Service Announcement, <<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/0405psa2.pdf>>. Retrieved 20 April 2005.)

Antivirals – a good idea?

"Influenza antiviral medications are ..." (CDC Website, "Influenza Antiviral Medications: 2004-05 Interim Chemoprophylaxis and Treatment Guidelines November 3, 2004", <<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/treatment/0405antiviralguide.htm>>. Retrieved 20 April 2005.)

"There is really scant-to-no evidence ..." (Scott Harper, M. D., "Clinician Outreach & Communication Activity Conference Call: Avian Influenza Update (February 5, 2004)", <<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/coca/summaries/pdf/avianflu020504.pdf>>. Retrieved 20 April 2005.)

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"An average of 36,000 people ..." (CDC Website, "Real People, Real Solutions (Flu Prevention Toolkit)", <<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/toolkit/stories/over65-vacc.htm>>. Retrieved 20 April 2005.)

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"Influenza (flu) seasons are unpredictable. ..." (Dr. Julie Gerberding, testimony to Congress, Nov 18, 2004. <<http://www.hhs.gov/asl/testify/t041118c.html>>. Retrieved 20 April 2005.)

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"The single best way to prevent ..." (CDC Website, "Preventing the Flu", <<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/preventing.htm>>. Retrieved 20 April 2005.)

"... we recorded no convincing evidence..." (*The Lancet* 2005; 365: 773-80.)

Meager Profits?

"Vaccine makers can not guarantee ..." (*Reuters*, 12 February 2004)

"We see the vaccine market as being ..." (Philip Hosbach, quoted in Christopher Snowbeck "Lawsuits, regulation make vaccines a tough business" *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, April 11, 2005.)

"Sales of our flu vaccines were \$332.4 million..." (Chiron Annual Report (2004) Form 10-K filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. Commission File Number: 0-12798.

<<http://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/706539/000104746904006411/a2129339z10-k.htm>>. Retrieved 20 April 2005.)

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"We must continue and strengthen..." (Dr. Julie Gerberding, testimony to Congress, 12 February 2004, <<http://www.hhs.gov/asl/testify/t040212a.html>>. Retrieved 20 April 2005.)

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