

Measles outbreaks: Blame Merck - not the parents!

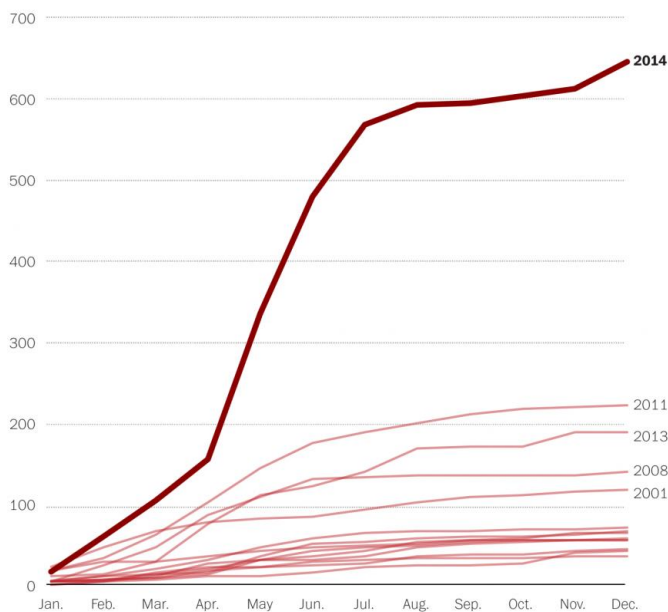
(Largo, FL) News outlets are firing out reports about the recent measles outbreak at Disneyland, blaming it on parents who are not vaccinating. But Children of God for Life says put the blame where it belongs: on Merck - the manufacturer of the only licensed MMR vaccine in the US.

Debi Vinnedge, Executive Director at Children of God for Life is using the CDC's own data to back up that claim.

"Merck officially stopped providing the morally produced separate doses of measles and mumps vaccines in 2009," she noted. "The graph below shows the impact of that rash decision."

Measles resurgent

New U.S. measles cases, cumulative, by month of rash onset, 2001 to 2014



WASHINGTONPOST.COM/WONKBLOG

Source: CDC

In 2008 Children of God for Life began a special campaign to Merck when they suddenly stopped making the separate doses. After massive public outcry, Merck promised to begin providing them again the following year. However, in October 2009, they reneged on that promise.

At the time, Merck spokeswoman Amy Rose said MMRII accounts for 98 percent of the company's volume sales for measles, mumps and rubella vaccines, compared to just 2 percent from monovalent vaccines.

According to Merck's own financial data, that accounted for approximately \$10 million in revenues the previous year, apparently not enough for them.

So when Sound Choice Pharmaceutical Institute stepped forward and asked Merck to allow their organization to provide the separate doses, Merck refused.

"In discussing within Merck we have concluded that we would have no desire to out license our monovalent technology," noted Jim Self of Merck's Vaccine and Infectious Disease Business Development division.

That left families who cannot use the aborted fetal MMR in good conscience, unprotected.

But not only is there a moral concern, there are also people who cannot use the MMR for health reasons. One such parent who contacted Children of God for Life stated that her child had a contraindication to the measles component and was desperately seeking mumps vaccine in order to give at least some protection to her child.

The only other option parents have is the morally produced Measles-Rubella and Mumps vaccines produced by the Kitasato Institute in Japan. However, after lengthy negotiations the FDA would not allow personal import either, leaving concerned parents with the option of either traveling to Japan or going without. Surprisingly, some have made that trip.

"Our vaccine adventure could not have been more pleasant, both on account of the proverbial courtesy of the Japanese and the delightful assistance we received," noted Dr Maurizio Ragazzi. "The process for vaccination against Measles, Mumps, Rubella at the Kitasato Hospital in Tokyo is efficient and delightful."

"Unfortunately, the vast majority of parents cannot afford to travel overseas to get vaccinated," noted Vinnedge. "As the sole provider of MMR in the US, Merck has a moral and social responsibility to ensure public health and safety by making those separate doses available again."

A petition to do just that is available at: <https://www.change.org/p/centers-for-disease-control-urge-merck-to-revive-single-dose-measles-and-mumps-vaccines>