



WRC-TV4

NBC Television Stations Division
National Broadcasting Company, Inc.

4001 Nebraska Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20016 202-885-4000

TRANSCRIPT

DPT: VACCINE ROULETTE

BROADCAST

APRIL 19, 1982

8:00-9:00 PM

WRC TV

WASHINGTON, D. C.

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THOMPSON

DPT. The initials stand for Diptheria, Pertussis, Tetanus. Three diseases against which every child is vaccinated.

For more than a year we have been investigating the "P", the Pertussis part of the vaccine. What we have found are serious questions about the safety and effectiveness of the shot.

The overriding policy of the medical establishment has been to aggressively promote the use of the vaccine. But it has been anything but aggressive in dealing with the consequences. While there has been active study and debate in other countries on this subject, there has been a general void of information in the United States.

Our objective in the next hour is to provide enough information so that there can be an informed discussion about this important subject. It affects every single family in America.

It's a fact of life. All children must get four DPT shots to go to school. Shots we are told will keep our children healthy. Shots we are told will protect every child from adread disease: Pertussis. It's Whooping Cough. But the DPT shot can also damage to a devastating degree.

MENDELSON

It's probably the poorest and most dangerous vaccine that we now have.

MORTIMER

The benefits of the vaccine, in my view, far outweigh the risks.

STEWART

I believe that the risk of damage from the vaccine is now greater than the risk of damage from the disease.

ROBBINS

Despite its limitations, Whooping Cough vaccine is something that should be given to children.

THOMPSON

Since 1933, studies have shown that the Whooping Cough or Pertussis vaccine causes brain damage. The controversy isn't really over the fact that it happens, but how often it happens, and whether it happens often enough to deem the vaccine more dangerous than the disease itself.

You don't have to ask the Grants of Beaver Dam, Wisconsin that question.

SCOTT GRANT

AGE: 21

REACTION: Harsh cry, infantile spasms
Severely Disabled and retarded

MARGE
GRANT

We had a child up to 4 months of age that was developing beautifully well. The doctor explained that he was giving Scott his first DPT shot. Between 12 and 14 hours he gave an outburst of a very hard cry. What we learned later were infantile spasms, it was determined at the Mayo Clinic after a group of doctors conferred and indicated that it was indeed the DPT shots that injured Scott. I went home and cried, Jim cried. We couldn't believe that we could possibly have such a black future.

JIM
GRANT

I had to start into business for myself. I had to be near the home all the time in regards to helping lift him, care for him and take care of his many needs. It is quite a big job. We have not had a vacation in 21 years. We simply can't go away. It's impossible to go away.

THOMPSON

It's important to remember, however, most children who get the DPT shot have minor reactions like swollen arms or fussiness. But there are more serious reactions that doctors should be watching for and worrying about.

The Pediatric Redbook, written by the American Academy of Pediatrics, lists high fever, collapse, shock-like collapse, unconsolable crying, convulsions and brain damage as reactions to the DPT vaccine. Those complications are associated with varying degrees of retardation ranging from severe brain damage...like Scott's, to learning disabilities which may never be connected to the shot.

The Physicians Desk Reference, prepared by manufacturers, says the "P" part of the vaccine is a possible link to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

This is for sure, the Whooping Cough, or Pertussis vaccine, is the most unstable, least reliable vaccine we give our children.

Dr. Gordon Stewart, epidemiologist and pediatrician Univ. of Glasgow, Scotland. A member of the British government's Committee on the Safety of Medicines.

STEWART Pertussis vaccine is a crude brew...literally...of those bacteria and all their growth products.

THOMPSON Dr. Robert Mendelsohn of Chicago, author, lecturer, and former head of Pediatrics Departments at the University of Illinois Medical School and the Michael Reese Hospital in Chicago.

MENDELSON The statistics of this country are wrong, and that the danger is far greater than any doctors here have ever been willing to admit.

THOMPSON Dr. Larry Baraff of the UCLA Medical Center in Los Angeles. He did a study of reactions to the Whooping Cough vaccine.

BARAFF I don't think that this is the type of vaccine that would be produced today. If this vaccine were produced in 1980 instead of in the 1930's and 40's, there'd be a different type of technology available and we would make a more purified vaccine.

THOMPSON The Bureau of Biologics bacterial program, it's part of the Food and Drug Administration, exists to make sure our bacterial vaccines are effective and safe.

Dr. John Robbins, head of that program, conceded the vaccine is not perfect, but...

ROBBINS

Much more is to be gained by immunizing the children with the current vaccines with its limitations, than by allowing our children to be exposed to contracting Pertussis.

THOMPSON

Dr. Edward Mortimer of Case Western Reserve Univ. here in Cleveland, Ohio, is considered by the government to be a leading expert in the field of childhood disease, especially Whooping Cough and its vaccine.

He has served on numerous FDA panels and speaks as well for the American Academy of Pediatrics.

MORTIMER

Whooping Cough is a bacterial disease. It's a disease that goes on for a long time. Some people used to call it "100 day fever", even though there isn't much fever associated with it. Two weeks of minor respiratory symptoms with the beginning cough, followed by two weeks of an increasing cough with the characteristic whoop (whoop) like that. At the end of the coughing spell, the poor kid often vomits. That child essentially ends up retaining little or no nutrition. With the damage to the lining of the bronchial tubes, the child is much more susceptible to pneumonia, and they incur lack of oxygen during the coughing spells. And in a young baby with a developing brain, lack of oxygen isn't necessarily a very good thing. The disease itself, for reasons that are not entirely clear, sometimes produces what is called encephalopathy--brain damage.

THOMPSON

Dr. Alan Hinman, chief of the immunization division at the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta.

HINMAN

For the individual who has Whooping Cough it is a serious disease. It certainly is not as fatal a disease as it was in the 30's nor is it as common.

THOMPSON

In fact, Whooping Cough in this country is almost gone. There are less than 2,000 cases a year. During the 1930's, though, Whooping Cough struck over 195,000 people. 4800 people died from the disease annually. Then, the disease plummeted. By the early 50's when the vaccine was in mass usage, the cases of Whooping Cough were down to 37,000 and 270 deaths. Today, with cases under 2,000, there are an average of about 9 deaths a year, almost all in tiny infants.

As you can see, the disease was already in decline before the vaccine was widely used, and there are a number of reasons for that...

MORTIMER

Better nutrition maybe, maybe better means of handling these kids when they got in the hospital. Maybe a change in the organism. That is not unknown.

THOMPSON

Dr. Bobby Young, a microbiologist. For 12 years he studied and researched vaccines at both the Bureau of Biologics and the Univ. of Maryland. He told us before his death last summer he believed the disease is now easily treated.

YOUNG

These days when we have bacterial antibiotics, when we have chemotherapy, death from pertussis is a relatively rare event.

STEWART

When children die of Whooping Cough it is because they are disadvantaged in some other way...a completely well child doesn't often die of Whooping Cough.

End of Segment

Beginning of 2nd Segment

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STEWART In this country and in the United Kingdom Whooping Cough has not been a killing disease for a very long time.

THOMPSON In 1974, the majority of British parents quit using the DPT shot. In the process of researching this story, we were told over and over again by US officials that the result was a major epidemic and that hundreds of thousands of people suffered and hundreds of people died.

THOMPSON
(Interview) From what you know, the situation in England is that there are more deaths and more hospitalizations now that they are not giving the vaccine.

HINMAN That's correct.

STEWART The death rate in the height of that so called epidemic to which a lot of attention has been drawn by your government here, the death rate was the lowest ever. And in Scotland, for example, the hospital admissions continued to fall.

THOMPSON Dr. Stewart is correct. According to official United Kingdom government figures, here is what happened. The British people became convinced that the vaccine was worse than the disease in 1974 and use of the vaccine dropped from about 80% acceptance to about 30% acceptance. There was an epidemic in 1978. It was not hundreds of thousands of cases, though. In fact at the peak of the epidemic, it was 66,000 cases. Twelve people died.

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In 1980, when vaccine acceptance was running about 40%, 21,200 people got Whooping Cough, six people died. In Great Britain, where the shot was once mandated, parents must now ask for it to get it...it is their choice.

DOCTOR Have you thought about the Whooping Cough injection?

MOTHER I have, but I've decided I don't want it.

DOCTOR Why is that?

MOTHER I just think she could be that one in a million that something might happen to. So I just decided to leave it out.

DOCTOR And your other two children didn't have it either.

MOTHER They didn't have it, no.

THOMPSON In this country parents can't say no.

POLLY GAUGERT

AGE 7

REACTION: Fever, convulsions

Undontrolled seizures and Brain Damage

MRS. GAUGERT I said, maybe she should not have this shot. Because it seems to me she's just not quite herself. And he checked her all over, and said, "well, she looks OK to me" and then he gave her the shot. And the next following morning when I was feeding her, she went into a gran mal seizure, which, of course, I didn't know what was happening. I though she was dying in my arms--is what it amounted to.

MURPHY She has seizures, probably one every five or ten minutes.

THOMPSON Polly's neurologist, Dr. Jerome Murphy, until recently head of Pediatric Neurology at Milwaukee Children's Hospital

MURPHY

She has injured herself frequently from these. A very cute little girl, unfortunately has to wear a helmet to prevent any more serious head injuries. I call it a post pertussis encephalopathy. I presently follow four children at least that I know of that the neurologic illness that started shortly after a DPT immunization. All four children have delay in their development and have seizures.

THOMPSON

(Interview)

Is her condition permanent?

MURPHY

I doubt she will ever resolve her seizures disorder. I hope that as she grows older we'll be able to control them better. As far as her delay in learning, I think that's a permanent problem.

THOMPSON

The Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control have long contended that children like Scott and Polly may not be DPT victims...that it may be a coincidence that they convulsed right after the shot. The government feels their convulsions might have happened anyway. Dr. Murphy disagrees...

MURPHY

There's just overwhelming data that there's an association. I think it's average for the...for Pediatric Neurologists to see such cases. I know it has influenced many pediatric neurologists not to have their children immunized with Pertussis.

THOMPSON

Serious reactions from the polio vaccine...one in four to five million children...and measles and mumps vaccine... one in a million, are almost unknown. Serious reactions from the Whooping Cough vaccine are common. It could be as low as one in every 700 children.

Medical knowledge about severe reactions from the Whooping Cough vaccine goes all the way back to the early 30's... report after report has been published in medical journals since then. In 1948 two American doctors reported on case histories of many children who had been brain damaged or died from DPT vaccines in Boston. The following year another doctor surveyed pediatricians throughout the country and found still more. Those studies have been forgotten.

THOMPSON

Between 1955 and 1958 Dr. Justus Strom surveyed over 200,000 children who got shots in 64 hospitals and clinics in Sweden. Then he looked at the previous ten years of Whooping Cough disease in Sweden. He found three times more brain damage and disorder caused by the vaccine than caused by the disease. He was strongly criticized, so he did another study. The two studies combined show a rate of destructive brain damage or death in one out of every 46,000 children who get the DPT shot.

The Swedish government has now stopped recommending the DPT vaccine. It feels the disease is now mild and the vaccine too reactive. So far, there has been no epidemic in Sweden.

West German studies determined the rate of serious brain damage from the "P" part of the DPT shot to be about one in every 39,000 children. The West German government stopped recommending the shot.

A study shows with only 10% of parents requesting that their children be vaccinated with the Pertussis Whooping Cough vaccine...that there has been no epidemic and no rise in deaths from the disease in West Germany.

Great Britain has done two studies on the Whooping Cough vaccine. The Committee on Safety of Medicines on which Dr. Gordon Stewart served determined one of every 53,000 children vaccinated was severely brain damaged...the National Childhood Encephalopathy study in England determined the rate at about one in every 100,000 children. However, that study only considered children who had convulsions and they had to last more than 30 minutes.

MORTIMER

When one has convulsions that last longer than a minute or two, one is much more apt to be dealing with some underlying brain disease.

STEWART

The only part of the study they really endorse is the one that supports the conclusions that they'd already formed.

THOMPSON
(Interview) But they sponsored yours as well.

STEWART They sponsored ours, and then when ours came up with different conclusions, they more or less disowned it.

THOMPSON It is the National Childhood Encephalopathy study and its rate of one in 100,000 children seriously damaged, that the British government, the US medical community and the US government recognize.

It was American doctors who first alerted the government to reactions back in 1936, but it was not until after British press reports caused people to quit using the vaccine in the United Kingdom that our government decided to take a look. Forty-two years had gone by between the first warning and the time the US government decided to commission its first study.

It was done by Dr. Larry Baraff of the UCLA Medical center.

BARAFF Because the Food and Drug Administration was concerned that this sort of public panic might spread to the United States they wanted to document that the vaccine was in fact safe and not associated with severe consequences.

THOMPSON The UCLA study found more reaction than had ever been seen before. The study estimates that as many as one in every 13 children had persistent or high pitched crying after the shot.

YOUNG This may be indicative of brain damage in the recipient child.

THOMPSON Also, the study estimates one in every 700 children had a convulsion or went into shock.

MURPHY In most cases it's a single spell, it does not recur, and the child does very well thereafter. But there are many children in whom there is a persistent neurologic deficit.

THOMPSON Even though it is well known some of the reactions children had in the UCLA study can cause brain damage, there has been no follow-up to find if any of those children suffered long term problems. Why? Because after nearly a half a century of waiting for answers, the only study commissioned in this country ran out of money. Neither the FDA nor the doctors involved have plans to pursue the matter.

THOMPSON
(Interview) This is the only real study that the government has done on the DPT shot in 40 years and you're saying you don't have enough money to go back and check on those children who had reactions.

ROBBINS The funds for contractual agreements...there are just no funds within the FDA for that now.

THOMPSON
(Interview) They were only followed for 48 hours. There is some reason to believe that some children develop complications after that. It seems that you have them in your grasp. Wouldn't you like to know what happened to them?

ROBBINS I think so...sure...it's just not the only thing that's been cut back unfortunately.

HINMAN Well, one has to be concerned about studies that are fairly careful studies that show rates substantially more frequent than what has previously been reported. I think, however, one also has to take into account the fact that this is one study.

THOMPSON
(Interview)

Do you know of any other studies which are going to be done to hopefully get to the bottom of all this?

HINMAN

I do not know of other studies underway at the present time.

THOMPSON

Two children died that were in the UCLA study. They weren't considered as being DPT related.

ROBBINS

The deaths that were reported in that study were SIDS. And the association between SIDS and the Whooping Cough vaccination, when we saw the data were just no more than occur by chance itself.

THOMPSON

Dr. Hinman at CDC is not that sure.

HINMAN

The bottom line is that one cannot be certain that DPT vaccination in some circumstances does not trigger Sudden Infant Death.

BARAFF

But the data we have to date suggests that there might be an association.

THOMPSON

Even when the Physicians Desk Reference written by manufacturers lists a possible connection between DTP and SIDS deaths, the man in charge of finding out says...

ROBBINS

There is no evidence for anything other than a coincidental association.

YOUNG I was employed at the Bureau of Biologics for several years, and it is my opinion that they very much do not wish to know adverse reactions.

THOMPSON Why?
(Interview)

YOUNG This will complicate their lives...considerably.

THOMPSON It is difficult to come up with a definitive answer as to how many children are being severely damaged or are dying from the DPT vaccine. There have been a lot of studies, but no one has ever searched out victims.

However, in the United Kingdom there is a compensation program. In England children may receive compensation if they are 80% disabled and can prove to the government that they were damaged by a vaccine. Dr. Stewart says just under 600 DPT victims have collected. He correlates that to one in every 25,000 children given the shot.

One in every 25,000 children in the US would mean 272 children are being severely disabled and retarded every year.

Dr. Robbins of the FDA just doesn't believe it.

ROBBINS If these numbers did occur I would be alarmed...I don't know what we would do about it... But I don't think we are having that many cases.

THOMPSON It is possible that there could be more reactions in the United Kingdom than there would be in the United States?
(Interview)

ROBBINS It is possible...but not probable.

YOUNG

You know, we start off with healthy infants, and we pop 'em not once, but three or four times with a vaccine...the probability of causing damage is the same each time. My greatest fear is that very few of them escape some kind of neurological damage out of this.

THOMPSON
(Interview)

You really believe that?

YOUNG

I really believe it. I mean, if the child isn't frankly rendered a vegetable and yet has a fever... and a very large fraction of the children have fever from it, also a large fraction have the screaming syndrome which is surely an irritation of the central nervous system. You add all of this up...how many infants that are receiving this are in some way damaged by the vaccine and how can you prove that they haven't been, or that they have been. All of them are vaccinated.

End of 2nd Segment

Beginning of 3rd Segment

THOMPSON

The major reason we don't know how many children are being damaged by the "P" part of the DPT vaccine is because doctors don't report reactions. The government medical schools and the medical community have done a good job informing doctors of the need for the vaccine. But from what we've found, many are not aware of the risks and the reactions from the shots.

ABRA YANKOVICH

AGE 2

REACTION: Stopped breathing, seizures
Severely disabled and retarded

MRS.
YANKOVICH

When she was four months old she...on the same day she had her vaccination she had her first seizure. She was shaking, and she was turning blue, and she appeared to have breathing problems. By the time we got her to the emergency room she was OK, and we told the doctor that she had had her vaccination that day. Could anything, could that be a link there. He said, "No, she probably was just choking. Just take her home and she'll be fine." But two weeks later she went into a grand mal seizure. She was very near dying.

THOMPSON

The Yankovich's who live in Kenosha, Wisconsin, said they knew it was the DPT shot that damaged Abra, but it wasn't until they found pediatric neurologist, Dr. Gordon Millichap in Chicago, that it was confirmed.

MRS.
YANKOVICH

He realized right away that it was the DPT.

MR.
YANKOVICH

Dr. Millichap told us about the shot and his feelings about the shot, especially the pertussis in the vaccination. And he said, personally, he wouldn't even give that to his dog.

THOMPSON

They also went to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn.

MRS.
YANKOVICH

Our pediatrician told the doctor the story about Abra. He said that she had seizures stemming from the DPT shot and the doctor interrupted him and said, "Yes, we know exactly what you're talking about. Send her up."

Mr.
YANKOVICH

She'll have good days and she'll have bad days. She'll experience hundreds of seizures in a day. And some days we're blessed with only one or two seizures.

MRS.
YANKOVICH

She's a joy to be around because she's such a sweet natured girl, but we've been told that she probably will never walk on her own, and she probably will never talk.

THOMPSON

Emily and Conley Yankovich have been close friends with Gail and Lorenzo Browne for some years. They don't live very far from each other in Kenosha. Knowing of Abra's reaction, Gail was very apprehensive when she took her son Reynaldo to the pediatrician for his DPT shot.

MRS. BROWNE

I asked the doctor what the odds are of our child having a similar reaction. And he said that I didn't have anything really to worry about...

REYNALDO BROWNE
AGE 20 months
REACTION: Convulsions
Controlled seizures

MRS. BROWNE

Then he went into a convulsion, and I thought, "Oh, no, not Abra again". And the doctors told us that he just had an ear infection and there was really nothing for us to be upset about. The pediatrician didn't want to admit that the shot was any problem.

THOMPSON

But now Reynaldo's doctor admits he is a victim of DPT. His treatment has been expensive.

MR. BROWNE

We're so far behind because of the expense that we have. All our savings is gone.

MRS. BROWNE

And eventually I just ended up going back to work part time to make the ends meet. We don't know if he'll learn to talk, or what he'll be like as he grows older. It's hard to look forward to even think about another child is the farthest thing from my mind.

THOMPSON

The Yankovich's, the Browne's, all the families we have talked to are angry, bitter and frustrated. They say doctors, manufacturers, and the government do not want to admit they exist. Of all the cases we have come to know, only one was reported to the manufacturer and the government. It was Reynaldo Browne, and it was only because Gail Browne forced her doctor to do it.

MRS. BROWNE

I wanted them to have accurate records because to me they told me one in 70,000 children react. We had our son and Abra in a town that has not much more than 70,000 people in it. So I thought those figures are obviously not correct figures.

MRS. SCOTT

I did a survey of all our immediate physicians in the area in Madison. I didn't get one that said "I record adverse reactions". As far as the reporting in this country is concerned, it is a disgrace, because it just simply isn't done.

THOMPSON

It is here at the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia, that all information about the disease and vaccine reactions is stored and analyzed. The problem almost everyone agrees, including the CDC itself, is that the reporting system for vaccine reactions does not work. Part of the problem is a lack of knowledge.

MRS. BROWNE

When they would bring the interns on their tours and tell them what was wrong with each child and they would get to Reynaldo, the student doctors would look at each other and say, "I didn't know that could happen."

THOMPSON

And there's another reason that keeps doctors from reporting.

BARAFF

Physicians in this day and age are always concerned about law suits.

THOMPSON More and more families of DPT victims are deciding to sue...not only doctors, but manufacturers and the government.

Alan McDowell, an attorney in Chicago, represents a number of them.

MCDOWELL Some institutions I've seen in this state and in some other states, that I have spoken to certain administrators at those hospitals or at those institutions, who have indicated that they do have children there as a result of the DPT vaccine...brain damaged children.

THOMPSON
(Interview) Do you think some children have been damaged by the DPT shot and their parents don't even know it?

MCDOWELL Absolutely, I don't think the parents would be aware of it, and normally the pediatrician, or whoever the doctor, or GP, wouldn't tell them.

THOMPSON
(Interview) Do you think doctors are reporting reactions?

MORTIMER NO

THOMPSON
(Interview) Why not?

MORTIMER Legally it's not reportable.

THOMPSON Do you think doctors are warning patients about the risks?

MORTIMER No.

MRS.
YANKOVICH

The only thing they tell you in your pediatrician's office, generally, from the consensus that we've seen, to expect these minor things: the fever, the sleeping, irritability, but nothing about the disastrous things that we've seen with our daughter.

MRS. GAUGERT

I don't think he warns people. They are always so busy...they don't have much time for anyone.

ROBBINS

I think if you as a parent and brought your child to a doctor for a DPT shot and the doctor said to you initially, "Well, I have to tell you that some children who get this vaccine get brain damaged," there's no question what your reaction would be. As a responsible parent you'd say, "I wish not to take this vaccine."

But we do things together as a community to protect each other.

MR. GRANT

I often wonder about those people who do these studies and who ultimately are the directors of them, and so forth, what they would say and how they would feel if it did in fact happen to one of theirs. It's an altogether different ballgame then.

THOMPSON

Kelli Holcomb got her shots through the US Army. Her parents were told nothing of the risk of the DPT vaccine.

KELLI HOLCOMB

AGE 8

REACTION: Persistent cry, stiffness
Spastic Quadriplegic and Brain Damage

MR. HOLCOMB

She received the shot in West Germany at a US health clinic. She had a reaction which now is known as excessive screaming reaction. The third shot was then given again at a US Army clinic in Ft. Belvoir, Va. which is right outside of DC. At that time she then experienced what is known as the post pertussis encephalopathy.

THOMPSON Monty Prieser of Charleston, West Virginia is Kelli's attorney. The Holcombs now live in Puerto Rico.

PRIESER She's 8 years old. She is a total quadriplegic. She can only really understand and blink her eyes "yes" or "no."

MRS. HOLCOMB Are you hungry". I didn't see. Are you hungry? Real hungry? I'm gonna lay you down. Kelly, bring it down.

PRIESER She is in a special education school in Puerto Rico When she is shown things and asked things she does blink "yes" or "no". She can do nothing else for herself. Her mother must bathe her, feed her, of course. She has great problems. She will probably like most quadriplegics develop respiratory problems and kidney problems in the future.

The United States was sued for medical malpractice, so to speak, medical negligence, for not warning the child and not saying when the child had the screaming syndrome, in Germany, for not saying to the mother, "Don't have any more." Then we don't believe that the U.S. properly asked the questions before they gave the third shot. The case was settled for \$600,000. \$390,000 will be paid by the United States, \$210,000 will be paid by Richardson-Merrell.

THOMPSON Kelli was injured eight years ago. If she got the shot in a public health clinic today her parents would probably be given a consent form to sign. It gives the official government risks: Brain damage one in every 100,000 shots. High fever, convulsions, abnormal crying or shock...one in every 7,000 children.

Almost all parents sign the form. Kids can't go to school without their shots.

YOUNG The doctor knows that this is mandated by regulation.

THOMPSON
(Interview) So he has no choice.

YOUNG So he has no choice, and indeed the parent has no choice.

THOMPSON Barbara Syska of Silver Spring, Maryland didn't want her child vaccinated. She took it to court...she lost.

MRS. SYSKA They do not inform parents of the most important aspects of it. At least not all important aspects to make the informed decision and the more important, the consent is coerced.

THOMPSON Since January 1979 her child has been taught at home.

MENDELSON I recommend that parents consult a lawyer, or that they go to their state legislators and to their elected representatives and make a fuss about it.

THOMPSON Marge Grant and a group of parents did just that. They lobbied the Wisconsin legislature until they got a law making vaccines voluntary in the state of Wisconsin.

MARGE GRANT The law now states that if you for any personal belief or personal conviction do not want your child immunized, you certainly do not have to. I insisted that this law must state that any person who immunizes a student under this law must record and identify the manufacturer and lot number used and the type of vaccine being given. And it is now written in the law. And I feel very good about that.

THOMPSON
(Interview)

Scottie's Law?

MARGE GRANT

I guess you could call it that. It's a little late for him but some other child could benefit, certainly.

THOMPSON

Wisconsin isn't the only state that has gone against federal guidelines and decided to allow parents a choice about the DPT shot. So have 19 other states. In Maryland, Virginia and the District you must have the shots to go to school.

End of 3rd Segment

THOMPSON

So far we have focused on the government and the medical community. But manufacturers, the drug companies, also have a responsibility to make sure that the DPT vaccine is safe and effective.

PREISER

If you're going to put something on the market, you have the ultimate responsibility to find out what that product is doing on the market. Is it safe, is it causing problems?

MCDOWELL

They are the ones who are making the money. They are the ones who can afford to do the necessary studies and yet they haven't done them.

And it's the children out there who are the innocent parties who suffer.

THOMPSON

Attorneys Preiser and McDowell accuse the manufacturers of destroying vaccine records before they can be subpoenaed for a DPT law suit.

We tried to talk to all of the companies that make DPT but none of them would do an on-camera interview. So we asked the FDA about it.

THOMPSON
(interview)

Do you know if manufacturers systematically destroy records?

ROBBINS

You know, I can't answer you. I'm sure they don't keep records...

THOMPSON

Do you have any control over that? Do you require them to maintain records?

ROBBINS

All records of adverse reactions must be part of their manufacturing file and are inspected each year as each manufacturing establishment is inspected for its manufacturing and control procedures.

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THOMPSON
(interview)

How long do they have to keep them?

ROBBINS

I don't know. I'm sorry.

MARGE GRANT

Our attorneys went to the FDA and asked for the protocols and the testing of the vaccine, and would you believe just several weeks before they lost...they just couldn't find...in fact, the word they used was, "Those records were here, but they vanished."

I have no question about the fact that there is a cover-up. There has got to be.

ROBBINS

There is no reason why we should want to hide those records from anyone. I hope it hasn't occurred. The last thing we want to do is to be negligent in our control of this.

THOMPSON
(interview)

We've known about the reactions to the shot for 40 years. Why only in 1973 did we start to think about it and worry about it?

ROBBINS

I think that there has always been interest in pertussis, but, you know, the vaccine was so effective, the scientific community didn't consider it a problem.

THOMPSON

But how effective is the DPT vaccine? The official answer from the Center for Disease Control.

HINMAN

The fact that a vaccine is, say, 80% effective means that 4 out of 5 people who receive the vaccine would be protected from Whooping Cough if they are exposed to it but one would not. //

BARAFF

It doesn't produce life-long immunity. It doesn't produce immunity in all children who receive it. It's possible that a child could get the full series of shots and still get whooping cough. It's also very likely that they could get the full series of shots and 6 or 7 years later get a modified form of the disease.

THOMPSON

Dr. Stewart says the English statistics show less than two-thirds of those vaccinated are protected.

STEWART

In any outbreak of Whooping Cough or pertussis about thirty percent of the children have been fully vaccinated.

THOMPSON
(interview)

How long is the DPT shot effective?

STEWART

For two or three years from the time of receiving it.

THOMPSON

The DPT vaccine has never been clinically tested in the United States. The British did clinical tests on the vaccine back in the late '40's and found it to be effective but reactive.

By Congressional mandate in 1973, the Food and Drug Administration set up panels to review all vaccines on the market. While the report on bacterial vaccines has never been published, we were able to get a draft of it under the Freedom of Information Act.

THOMPSON It shows that very few manufacturers of the DPT vaccine were able to give the panel any documentation that their vaccine was either effective or safe. It shows that the panel went ahead and continued licenses anyway, pending more information. And it shows one DPT vaccine that was O.K.'d on a three to two vote. Dr. Mortimer was a member of that panel.

MORTIMER Here we've got a highly reputable manufacturer whose manufacturing techniques insofar as we can tell are impeccable, who insofar as we can tell does everything to monitor what happens with that vaccine as best that manufacturer can, and, moreover, a vaccine upon which the public depends. Therefore, it seems entirely appropriate to us to permit that vaccine to be produced for another period of "X" years.

THOMPSON
(Interview) How can a vaccine, which every child in America might be exposed to, be O.K.'d on a three to two vote?

MORTIMER Because there was circumstantial evidence that it worked.

THOMPSON
(Interview) But a three to two vote?

MORTIMER That's a far greater majority than we elect presidents on!

ROBBINS There was no reason, I think, at that time to question the efficacy of the products because they were so successful. The standards of safety and efficacy that we demand for vaccines probably exceed by a great deal those standards that we have for almost everything else that we offer as medicines.

Every lot that the manufacturer makes is tested both at the manufacturer and at the Bureau of Biologics.

THOMPSON
(Interview)

Is that normal?

ROBBINS

No, it reflects our concern for this vaccine.

THOMPSON

A General Accounting Office audit in 1979 found the test FDA uses to examine those lots is faulty. An FDA panel also questioned the adequacy of current vaccine tests and noted that they are conducted on the premise that children in this country get three shots... in fact most children get four.

Bobby Young who worked at the FDA's Bureau of Biologics..

YOUNG

I believe that scientists at FDA would indicate to you that the mouse protection test that they employ for pertussis vaccine is not adequate.

ROBBINS

Our analysis of the vaccine effectiveness by the laboratory test is not as good as we would like, but it certainly can't be too bad since the vaccine has been so effective.

YOUNG

They have their own vested interest and their own authorities and experts who are being paid salaries to make this appear to be a very protective and safe vaccine. And anything that mitigates against the safety and protectiveness of a vaccine in essence mitigates against their recommendations.

THOMPSON

While the government has said for years that the vaccine is effective and safe...it is working hard to try to develop a new vaccine. In fact, with the FDA's help, the Japanese rushed a new, what they call purer vaccine onto the market after Japanese parents lost confidence in the old shot. That vaccine, however, has never been clinically tested so it may be two to four, maybe ten years before it is determined to be safe enough to use here in the US.

THOMPSON
(Interview)

If the government had said, "Look, there is a real serious problem with this vaccine," a long time ago, maybe we would have had a new vaccine a long time ago.

MORTIMER

That's perfectly possible, but the government has to establish priorities.

THOMPSON

The fact is, we may have had a safer shot a long time ago. For many years the Eli Lilly Company produced a different type of DPT vaccine which it called TriSolgen.

ROBBINS

It was the impression of the physicians that used the vaccine that this was the safest Whooping Cough vaccine on the market. I don't know if that's real. It's only hearsay evidence. It was never really quantitatively compared.

THOMPSON
(Interview)

Why, if you thought that the Lilly vaccine might be less reactive and still be effective, wouldn't you have taken a close look at it yourself to determine whether it really was a better vaccine?

ROBBINS

We are developing a vaccine, but our primary objective is to try to understand in as precise and as modern terms as we can those components of the vaccine that cause side reactions, and that also might cause immunity.

THOMPSON
(Interview)

But in the case of the Lilly vaccine, is it possible that we could have let a good one get away?

ROBBINS

Oh, I think we have no control over that. That was the decision of the Eli Lilly Company to stop its manufacture.

THOMPSON

There are some children who absolutely should not get the DTP shot. There are some children who are at serious risk if they do.

We'll examine that in just a moment.

End of 4rd Segment

THOMPSON

The FDA is working on a new vaccine which it hopes will be effective but also a lot less reactive than the one that we have now. The problem is, nobody knows when that vaccine will be available. And, in the meantime parents must decide whether they will or will not give their children the DPT vaccine.

We can tell you this...the disease whooping cough... pertussis...is not a pleasant disease. It lasts a long time. But, from everything we have seen, it is no longer a killer...except in infants who are probably too young to receive the vaccine.

We can also tell you this...some children and some families are much more at risk than others. No one knows more about that than Dan and Mary Resciniti of Binghamton, New York.

ANTHONY RESCINITI

AGE: 19

REACTION: Persistent cry, fever, seizures
Severely disabled and retarded

Tony Resciniti...19 years old...he suffers a convulsion about once a day. The drugs to control his convulsions cost \$1200 a year...he has spent part of his life in an institution.

Tony convulsed within 24 hours after getting the DPT shot. Regardless, doctors continued the rest of the shots. After Tony's history with the DPT shot, his brother Leo should never have had the vaccine.

LEO RESCINITI

AGE: 17

REACTION: Fever, convulsions
Severely disabled and retarded

Leo Resciniti...17 years old...Only a few hours after his first DPT shot, Leo too, went into convulsions. His temperature soared...regardless, his pediatrician gave him a second shot.

MORTIMER

In terms of the severe complication--encephalopathy--that information was all anecdote until less than a year ago...until the British study appeared.

ROBBINS Did he say last couple of years? Two years?

THOMPSON That's what he said. Well he said, since the National
(Interview) Childhood Encephalopathy Study in England.

ROBBINS I can't speak for the whole medical community. I
can only speak for myself. I've always known that
whooping cough vaccines do produce some side reactions.

THOMPSON We discovered while researching this story that
many doctors and nurses are not aware of the risks
or reactions...or the warning signs that mean the DPT
shot should not be given the second time.

Case in point: The District of Columbia Medical
Society held a recent seminar on immunizations.
When a panel of doctors and scientists was asked
if a DPT shot should be given to children who have
had febrile convulsions, no definitive answer was
given. In fact, Dr. Saul Krugman, a well known
professor of pediatrics at New York University's
Medical Center said...A history of convulsions is not
a reason to avoid the "P" part of the DPT shot.
The people attending that meeting were misinformed.

Convulsions are specifically listed by the American
Academy of Pediatrics in the Pediatric Redbook as a
contraindication to giving another shot. Here is
what that doctor's handbook states as reasons not
to give another whooping cough part of the DPT shot
to your child:

Had a high fever
Had convulsions
Went into shock
Collapsed
Cried Excessively
Lost awareness or
Showed signs of brain damage.

THOMPSON

Manufacturers add that you should not give the shot to children with nervous system disorders, those undergoing chemical therapy or who have had an infection or fever. While the American Academy of Pediatrics does not include it in its guidebook, manufacturers say you should not vaccinate a child who has a personal or family history of central nervous system disorders or convulsions, like the Resciniti family.

But, what about the children who have already been damaged? Who's helping them? Unless they sue, and many families don't have the money or don't want to do that...nobody is helping them pay the enormous costs that a brain damaged child brings upon a family.

MARGE GRANT

I just recently read that it is going to go up to \$100 a day if you institutionalize a child like Scott. Those are tax dollars. Now, that's \$36,000 a year for one individual. I can keep him home where he really belongs, where we want him, for far less. But surely a child like this deserves to stay out of an institution and unless there is compensation, you simply cannot do it.

THOMPSON

At least six nations provide compensation for vaccine related injuries. They are Great Britain--which has made tax free awards of \$20,000 each to just under 600 DPT victims, Japan, France, Denmark, West Germany and Switzerland. Only one state in this country has a compensation program: California. It's been in effect since 1979. Its first award...a three month old DPT victim.

The only time the U.S. government has compensated victims was for adverse reactions to the swine flu vaccine. It has, however, commissioned two studies to try to determine the cost of an overall vaccine compensation program. It was determined the cost per DPT victim could be as high as \$890,000. No legislation has ever been introduced. The official position...

HINMAN

The position of the Department of Health and Human Services has been that there is not as yet evidence that such a system is needed.

THOMPSON

Thousands of children get the "P" part of the DPT shot and apparently suffer few consequences. However, some children have suffered learning disabilities and severe brain damage as a direct result of the shot.

There is no way of knowing how many DPT victims there are in the United States, but there certainly are far more than the medical community or the government would like to admit. The government has known about serious reactions to the DPT shot for 40 years. Its one and only study in 1978 showed a very high rate of reaction to the shot, but that study has virtually been ignored. So has the evidence that other countries have found that Whooping Cough is probably not the dread disease it used to be and the vaccine may not be as effective as previously thought.

We have found in our investigation of the DPT shot that many doctors and nurses are misinformed about just which children are at risk if they are given the vaccine. We have also found most doctors that see reactions to the shot do not report them to the government or the manufacturers or to parents.

We have found vaccines have been allowed on the market with little effectiveness or safety data, and that the tests for determining those things is faulty in itself.

What is perhaps the most disconcerting about all of this is that states and private doctors have blindly followed the lead of the government in making this shot mandatory, while at the same time, we've found some doctors themselves have chosen not to give the "P" part of the vaccine to their own children, choosing instead to give just the "D" and the "T".

Our objective has been to provide information so there can be an informed discussion about Whooping Cough... The dilemma for parents remains.

BARAFF I would certainly vaccinate my child...yes.

MURPHY I would probably advise against it...if the rest of the community were getting the Pertussis.

ROBBINS Much more is to be gained by immunizing the children with our current vaccines with its limitations, than by allowing our children to be exposed to contracting Pertussis.

MENDELSON I feel that the vaccine should not be used, because the vaccine today represents a much greater threat than the Whooping Cough itself does.

YOUNG I recommended in writing to my daughter, so she could take this letter to her pediatrician (we don't normally communicate that formally) that my grandsons receive the "D" and the "T" component of DPT but not the pertussis component.

MORTIMER I believe it should be given to every child in the United States with the exception of very rare children in which there is a specific reason not to.

STEWART I believe that the risk of damage from the vaccine is now greater than the risk of damage from the disease.

HINMAN I don't believe we have reached a stage in this country with pertussis where we have approached the stage where vaccination is more hazardous than the risk of disease.

(Child crying,
receiving shot
FATHER of Child See...it's all gone already.