

PRESERVE POLIO SOCIETY
Emily Dalton, M.D.

Whenever one of my patients refuses vaccines for their child, I cringe. Why turn down one of the best medical protections available? Vaccines have prevented massive numbers of deaths and uncountable lives of anguish. Refusing them makes as much sense as refusing clean water or sanitation systems. For those of us with basic medical and scientific knowledge, this decision is incomprehensible.

However, for the average parent, vaccines may seem incomprehensible. Medical science has advanced to the point where many people can't understand how vaccines work, and don't appreciate the benefits they have brought about. Most parents don't have a scientific education, so in decision-making they rely on the loudest voices that jive with their inner sense of values. The collective memory of children in iron lungs or infants coughing themselves to death from pertussis is gone, so fear of disease has been removed from the equation. In modern times we see the benefits of our new vaccines by looking at statistics from population studies, which most parents don't read or know how to interpret. Newer vaccines prevent diseases that were relatively rare to begin with--meningitis, epiglottitis, diarrheal dehydration, etc. so the beneficial impact is really only appreciated by those of us who work in medicine or read statistical studies. **Vaccines have been devalued.**

Many of my patients refuse the HPV vaccine because they don't want their children having sex. This is illogical, but it's almost as if they believe there is something seedy about the vaccine. As soon as I say the words "genital warts" their eyes glaze over, and I know I have lost them. **Vaccines have been made dirty.**

One anti vaccine website at www.vaccinationdebate.net claims that vaccines are ineffective, are made of toxic poisons that will reduce your child's vitality, and that childhood infections like measles or whooping cough are beneficial to a child's health. Poor vaccines! They need a a reputation watcher. **Vaccines have been made dangerous.**

One way to understand the phenomenon of not vaccinating is to view it through a lens of power and control. Parents want the right to choose what they feel is best for their children; they don't want to be told what to do. They want a menu with choices at the doctor's, and in this way feel they are participating in the decision making about what happens with their child. ***Ironically, refusing a vaccine makes them feel like good parents:*** they have spend time "researching" the issue, they have paid attention and reviewed each side of the argument and they have made the best decision they can out of love and concern for their child. They are doing the most basic thing that all good parents do: protect their child. Unfortunately, they are protecting their children from medical care instead of from disease. **Vaccines have been made into a power struggle.**

One of the most frustrating aspects in dealing with the anti-vaxxers is that these beliefs do not respond to evidence. You can show parents the studies demonstrating the safety and efficacy of vaccines, and argue yourself blue in the face and they remain absolutely resolute in their convictions. After battling this issue repeatedly, I am discouraged. I have reached the point where I am almost ready to say....If you can't beat 'em, join 'em. In fact, if vaccines are as bad and evil and toxic and damaging as the anti-vaccine camp would have us believe, someone should be organizing to abolish them!

I propose a new advocacy group that I think the anti-vaxxers can get behind: the "Preserve Polio Society" (viruses have rights too). Through this society, the anti-vaccine folks could put their money where their mouth is and advocate for the abolition of vaccines and the return of vaccine preventable illnesses. We could set up debates with the Rotarians or the World Health Organization (who are working to eradicate polio worldwide) so the public could hear both sides of the issue.

Here are some of the key points that the Preserve Polio Society could use to promote its agenda:

1. Polio is a natural infection, and therefore healthier than an artificial vaccine.
2. In any case, death is natural too.
3. Vaccinating is unfair to the medical supply companies whose businesses have been drastically curtailed by fewer people in wheelchairs!
4. How else are we going to curb overpopulation?
5. Viruses have rights too!
6. Walking is overrated.
7. Breathing is overrated.

Join the Preserve Polio Society today. Let's bring back polio NOW!. Like us on Facebook and Twitter.