

3.7 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the H.P.V. vaccination:

Following the recent media release by the Head of Healthcare Programmes, the Clinical Lead for Immunisation and the Medical Officer of Health regarding H.P.V. (Human Papilloma Virus) vaccination, can the Minister advise whether the views expressed are compatible with her own in this matter?

Deputy A.E. Pryke of Trinity (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

Firstly, before I give my response, I would like to correct a point in the Deputy's question. There was no media release. The comments made by the Medical Officer of Health and her team were made in response to an approach from the media. Human Papilloma Virus or H.P.V. is a deadly form of cancer of the cervix that kills one to 2 women in Jersey each year. That is one or 2 too many and it would be irresponsible of me as the Minister for Health and Social Services not to make a vaccine against the disease as widely available as possible. The H.P.V. vaccine programme in Jersey commenced in 2008 and it mirrors that being used across 120 countries worldwide, including the U.K., Australia and Canada. Like all vaccines, it has undergone vigorous testing before being licensed for use and its safety is underpinned by the U.K. and European regulatory agencies for medicine. This vaccine will save the lives of young girls who would otherwise be at a risk of developing cervical cancer so yes, my views are exactly in line with those expressed by the Medical Officer of Health.

3.7.1 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

I have several questions and I guess I will start with this one. The Medical Officer of Health has stated that Gardasil has no major safety issues and is a major step forward. I take it the Minister agrees with that. That is what was reported when, in fact, there have been thousands of adverse reactions across the world, including death. The vaccination has been proven to be less than 1 per cent effective and we all know not long ago, Tamiflu, which is a completely useless product, cost the Island millions. So does the Minister not agree that we should be able to rely on public health information and not have to do our own research to get to the truth?

The Deputy of Trinity:

It is scaremongering. Gardasil is a highly effective anti-cancer vaccine. Over 100 million doses have been given safely in 120 countries and I have named a few already. Any new drug goes through specific clinical trials and part of that trial is to put out any side-effects that come but the side-effects, which are minor, are outweighed by the actual benefit that it will give to young girls to try and prevent or lower the risk of getting cervical cancer.

3.7.2 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

Is the Minister aware that the manufacturer of Gardasil – Merck - it was they who funded the study that declared Gardasil safe? Is she aware that the same company are known for falsifying drug trials, including mumps vaccine and infamous for the deaths of 38,000 with its drug Vioxx. So I ask the Minister what assurances can she give first of all - unlike in other countries that she has mentioned - that none of her staff are receiving inducements to sell these products; and given the information from her department is inaccurate not only on this but on other issues as well, what action she will be taking to ensure in future the public are accurately informed?

[10:30]

The Deputy of Trinity:

I take great offence that the Deputy has insinuated that the Public Health team might take a cut in the drug manufacturer's ... I will leave it there. Every drug goes through very rigorous testing and we look at expert bodies such as the U.K. Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, the U.K. Department of Health, the Medicines and Healthcare Product Regulatory

Agency, and European Medicines Agency before making any decisions about offering vaccines in Jersey.

3.7.3 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

Earlier on, the Minister mentioned Canada. Is the Minister aware of the Canadian medical study which included a list of Gardasil side effects of death, convulsions, paresthesia, paralysis, Guillain-Barré syndrome, transverse myelitis, facial palsy, chronic fatigue syndrome, autoimmune disorders, deep vein thrombosis. I will not go on. Is the Minister aware of information out there on this drug?

The Deputy of Trinity:

He is scaremongering. Over 100 million doses of this drug are given around the world and to 120 countries. If there were the side effects that the Deputy has listed, well, it would not have got further than past the clinical trials. We know that when the clinical trials are made, they always put side effects in any drug, whether it is the common drug, paracetamol, aspirin or such like, it does not mean that you should stop taking the medicine; it has gone through vigorous testing.