

The Flu Scare Game

October 9, 2004

I always know when it's flu season. First, the media begins its usual role as hysterical government press secretary, uncritically trumpeting the same cooked numbers about the coming flu epidemic. The steady drone of recent broadcasts, including one on NBC's Today Show (10/6/04), warn that the flu kills about 36,000 people every year in the United States. The broadcasts usually cite the CDC as the source of this huge number. This is borne out by the main CDC page, with <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/keyfacts.htm> its immediate link to flu information and statistics. It's a crock, a lie, and a sham; a conspiracy to generate fear and stampede people to use a vaccine of questionable effectiveness to the benefit of pro-immunization bureaucrats, and big pharma. Sounds harsh, but follow the math and the money.

A cursory glance at the most recent (2001) death statistics from the http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/dvs/nvsr52_09p9.pdf Data Highlights page posted on the CDC site, shows that Influenza and Pneumonia (International Cause of Death numbers J10 and J18) killed 62,034 people. Quick mental subtraction would tell you that just over half were killed by the flu, versus pneumonia, if the 36,000 number is correct. So far, the size of the flu epidemic seems plausible. http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/dvs/nvsr52_09p9.pdf Here's the link to the National Vital Statistics System page within the CDC site that has the Data Highlights and Full Reports.

This is important, because the Data Highlights page is just that, a single page highlight of all the various mortality stats gathered by the CDC. Now, let's dig into the more detailed reports. The http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr52/nvsr52_03.pdf "Deaths: Final Data for 2001" report is an 8MB PDF. Skip it unless you want all the charts detailing deaths by race, age, and ethnicity. The 2002 preliminary report contains the interesting parts of the 2001 final report, as well as data from 2002. The second search result for J10 (the mortality code for flu) brings us to page 16 of 48, which contains the breakout of flu and pneumonia. Total flu deaths for 2002: 753. Pneumonia accounted for the other 65,231 deaths. Scrolling to the right are the numbers for 2001.

Again, total flu deaths were under one thousand, coming in at 257. That's right, less than a thousand people died of the flu in 2001 and 2002, according to the CDC's own numbers. Searching around on the CDC website reveals several more pages that call into question the 36,000 deaths per year number. For example, <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/qa/0304season.htm> this page dedicated to the 2003-04 season states that "152 influenza-associated deaths among children" occurred during the 2003-04 flu season, but carefully avoids answering its own question about the total number of dead in the 2003-2004 season. Instead, it goes on in serious sounding quasis-scientific statistico blather: "During

the 2003-04 season, the percentage of P & I-associated deaths was higher than the epidemic threshold for 9 consecutive weeks."

Again, lumping pneumonia and flu deaths together, even though http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/submenu/sub_pneumonia.htm the CDC does not recognize the flu as one of the many causes of pneumonia.

Finally, the CDC's own <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/gen-info/pandemics.htm> "Flu Pandemics" page puts deaths in the United States from the Spanish Flu Pandemic of 1918-1919 at 500,000, Asian Flu pandemic of 1957-58 at 70,000, and the Hong Kong Flu pandemic of 1968-69 at 34,000. These are the three 20th century pandemics, and two of them killed close to what the CDC is now calling average. What's going on here? How is it that the CDC could be off by two orders of magnitude between their own official mortality stats, and the press kit number of 36,000 deaths per year. Could it be that the CDC is somehow misleading the public about the relative dangers of the flu?

Here is a link to the CDC-AMA sponsored <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/article/1826-8377.html> National Influenza Vaccination Summit for 2004. This is an invitation only conference hosted by the CDC and the American Medical Association. Luckily for the public, the speaker list, agenda, and presentations are posted online. The attendees list of this CDC-AMA sponsored event reads like a lobbying group for flu immunization. Of the 97 attendees, vaccine manufacturers CHIRON (10), Aventis-Pasteur (10), Medimmune (5), and Baxter Vaccines (4) were a full 29 strong. Medical Conglomerates Kaiser Permanente (6) and McKesson (3) rounded out the big corporate influence cabal. The CDC sent 39 attendees and the AMA (proper, not members) had 4. The remainders of the attendees were a mix of state and local health departments (e.g. Rhode Island Medical Society), smaller pharma companies (e.g. Solvay Pharmaceuticals), and pro-immunization organizations (e.g. Sabin Vaccine Institute).

And did these learned scholars of immunology, virology, and general public health debate the merits of vaccinating against a virus that kills less than 1,000 people in most years? Perhaps they were celebrating the fact that only a few hundred died from the flu, thanks to their vaccines? Not exactly. The manufacture, distribution, and administration of flu vaccine is a cash cow, worth several hundred million dollars a year. Here's a quote from <http://biz.yahoo.com/e/040303/chir10-k.html> CHIRON CORP's 2003 Annual Report: "Sales of our flu vaccines were \$332.4 million, \$90.0 million and \$74.7 million in 2003, 2002 and 2001, respectively." Those numbers represent just the manufacture of flu vaccine, from one company, not including any of the profits from the distribution, or administration of the vaccine.

Buried in the speakers presentations from the conference are some interesting stats. It turns out that 147 children under 18 died of the flu in the 2003 04

season. Of those, 101 reported whether or not the child received the flu vaccine. Of those, 22 had received at least one flu shot, and 4 had received multiple flu shots. That puts the percentage of immunized children that died at just under 22% of all children (page 10 of 23, http://www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/36/2004_flu_cochi.pdf Cochi Presentation.) Further in the report we learn that the CDC's own studies show they believe the flu vaccine to be only 16%-63% effective against the flu, while a French report shows 61% effectiveness against influenza-like-illness (without confirming that it's actually the flu).

According to a Harvard study, (http://www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/36/2004_flu_nowak.pdf Nowak presentation, page 26), only 22% of parents of children 6-23 months had them immunized, and only 30% of children under 18 were immunized. Now, I'm no Dr. John Lott when it comes to statistics, but if the ratio of immunized to non-immunized children in the total population (22% - 30%) is nearly identical to the immunized to non-immunized ratio of children in an admittedly small sample of children that died (22%), the case could be made that the flu vaccine is largely worthless.

In other words, the best case these needle-happy pro-flu vaccinators can mount shows that their immunization program would work, maybe, just over half the time, but some simple number crunching of our own shows that its probably much less than that. The coup de grace' comes from one of the CDC's own, Glen Nowak, PhD., in a presentation titled http://www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/36/2004_flu_nowak.pdf "Planning for the 2004-5 Vaccination Season: A Communication Situation Analysis" the good doctor lays out a media manipulation campaign that would make Goebbels proud. Pages 27 on detail a literal "7 Step Recipe" that the CDC will use, in conjunction with the virus makers, to "(Frame)... the flu season in terms that motivate behavior (e.g., as very severe, more severe than last or past years, deadly)".

To summarize thus far:

- * The flu kills fewer than 1,000 people on average, not 36,000
- * Flu Vaccine is of highly dubious effectiveness
- * The CDC and Vaccine Manufacturers are in closed door sessions with the primary stated purpose of boosting vaccination numbers by spreading fear.

At this point, some may think, "Hey, it might be worth getting, just as a preventative measure. Sort of like throwing a little salt over your shoulder, what can it hurt?" Plenty. The good Dr. Donald Miller, cardiac surgeon and Professor of Surgery at the University of Washington in Seattle, recently did <http://www.lewrockwell.com/miller/miller14.html> an article about the dangers of mercury in vaccines and amalgam fillings. The CDC has a position on

Thimerosal (methyl mercury based preservative) in flu vaccines <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/qa/thimerosal.htm> posted to its website. Without admitting that Thimerosal might be responsible for the epidemics of autism, alzheimers, and ADD in this country, the CDC gives us a sop about taking it out or removing it. Reading the fine print, however, tells us: "the majority of influenza vaccines distributed in the United States currently contain Thimerosal as a preservative." Furthermore, in a bit of regulatory trickery, the FDA is letting smaller amounts go undisclosed: "..some contain only trace amounts of Thimerosal and are considered by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to be preservative-free." In other words, even if you ask to see the vaccine label, check for Thimerosal, and get a warm fuzzy feeling about the shot being labeled "Thimerosal free," thanks to the FDA's accommodation of drug manufacturers, it could still contain mercury.

When the major manufacturers of flu vaccine get together with the CDC in a closed door summit with the sole purpose of figuring out how to stick 185 million doses of a questionable vaccine into a population in which less than 1,000 people a year die, what should we call it? Yes, Virginia, it is a conspiracy. Luckily the conspirators are foolish enough to believe that their website is safely hidden amidst all the chaff of the Internet, or else, are so brazen in their contempt for the general population that they think we can't do a little math and conclude "The vaccine doesn't work, and the flu is a flim-flam!"

Eventually, there will be another pandemic of the flu, and thousands will die. The CDC should concentrate on finding ways to lower the spread, working alternatives to vaccines, and ways to minimizing the severity of the flu, rather than pumping out fake numbers, creating an aura of fear and hysteria, and shilling for profits to huge pharma companies.