

# Is vaccination more risky than the disease?

**I**MMUNISATION, says Hilary Butler, is creating a medical timebomb and has taken the lid off a veritable Pandora's Box of conditions affecting the immune system.

By messing around with the body's own immunity, she believes vaccination destroys natural resistance to both simple and chronic infections.

Cancer is now an accepted early childhood disease, with measles, mumps and chicken-pox, and is now the second most common cause of children's deaths after accidents, she points out.

"To me it's so obvious. The kids now between five and 14 have had more immunisations in their lives than all my ancestors put together."

And doctors, says Hilary Butler, are dishing out dosages wholesale without offering enough information about side-effects, fatalities or permanent damage caused by immunisation. Doors close when such information is sought, she says, and no real long-term studies are being done.

She believes doctors do not recognise or look for common side effects and therefore statistics are unbalanced. And she says most doctors themselves do not question or bother to find out about immunisation because it is officially authorised.

Hilary Butler takes an extreme stand: her two children Ian (4) and David (nearly 2) have not been immunised and she is against all such measures.

Instead she believes a diet of nonrefined foods, sensible precautions and homeopathic preparations will do. When whooping cough laid low many of Ian's young friends, he did not contract it, she says.

Although she has not gone out of her way to be provocative, she has found medical authorities and doctors simply do not want to know about her criticisms.

**S**HE knows her stand has earned her the reputation of being a bit of a crank or an oddball. "I'm starting to get fairly immune."

But mostly she talks to those who want to listen: to mothers, to people who want to look at her extensive files. She recently addressed the Home Birth Association and may address its national conference this year.

Butler has a steely quality of commitment and an arsenal of information at her disposal.

The telephone rings constantly at her Tuakau home. During the interview a radio talkback session had turned to the subject of Measles Monday and Butler supporters wanted ammunition before they had their say.

Recent suggestions that parents should be paid if children were vaccinated or family benefit withheld if they were not anger Hilary Butler. That choice should be a free one for parents, she says.

"If immunisation is such a good thing . . . why do they have to resort to threats and blackmail? In some ways I don't care . . . whether people get their children immunised as long as they have heard both sides of the story."

Butler makes frequent visits to the Philson library at Auckland University School of Medicine, somewhat surreptitiously.

Each trip into town takes two hours' driving and costs about \$100 taking into account the time her husband, Peter, has to take off work (he is a self-employed book

Immunisation is accepted today as being necessary to maintain a healthy population and world-wide health authorities are committed to mass protection programmes. But there are casualties and critics of immunisation. In Britain hundreds of families are fighting for compensation for children they believe were brain-damaged by immunisation. **KIRSTEN WARNER** talks to Hilary Butler, a New Zealand campaigner against vaccination, and examines some of the pros and cons of the jab.

representative and former primary school headmaster). They estimate the campaign has cost them at least \$2500 so far, *annually*

**L**IKE most of her generation, Hilary Butler, grew up believing in vaccination, and had her share. It was not until she had children of her own she started questioning, and then only indirectly at first.

She had a difficult birth with her first son, Ian. She started asking questions about what had happened during her labour, and says she had a running battle for a year before being allowed to see her own medical file.

At the same time her own doctor was applying pressure about immunisation. She felt the information her doctor could provide about side effects was insufficient.

Her previous clash with the medical authorities had not predisposed her to compliance. She got hold of some of the writings of American paediatrician Dr Robert Mendelsohn, strictly anti-immunisation, with whom she continues to communicate.

He writes under the banner *The People's Doctor* and is a provocative and well-known author of *Confessions of a Medical Heretic and Male Practice — How Doctors Manipulate Women and How to Raise a Healthy Child in Spite of your Doctor*.

Mendelsohn believes the greatest threat of childhood diseases these days is the "fanatic zeal" with which doctors "blindly shoot foreign proteins into the body of your child without knowing what eventual damage they may cause."

Says Butler: "What we have done by artificial immunisation is essentially to trade off our acute epidemic diseases of the past century for the far less curable chronic diseases of the present. In doing so we have also opened up limitless evolutionary possibilities for the future."

Are cancer, leukemia, rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis and other diseases the trade-off for not getting mumps and measles?

Does the attenuated or weakened live virus used in some vaccination stay in the body and become part of its genetic makeup, or does it subtly set up a constant state of false immunity?

**A**LTHOUGH once-common childhood diseases have diminished or disappeared, the real reason may be improved living conditions and nutrition.

Butler produces the McKinlay graphs (known and accepted by one Auckland Medical School doctor) clearly showing a decline in epidemic diseases long before vaccination was introduced. But she says what is generally shown in graphs is only the decline after vaccination began.

To her, vaccination is a war of statistics and their selective interpretation — which critics would accuse her of too.

