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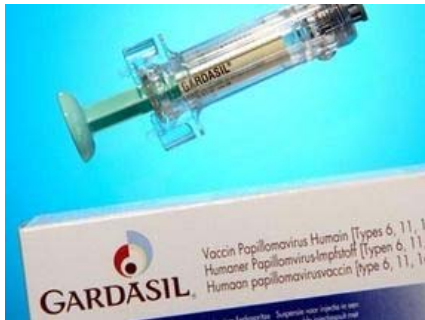
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NEWS / SHOWBIZ

SEX VIRUS VACCINE LINKED TO THREE DEATHS



Cervical cancer vaccine

Sunday June 24, 2007

By Lucy Johnston

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THREE deaths have been linked to the controversial sex virus jab health officials want to give to all 12-year-old girls.

Doctors suspect the jab, which protects against a sexually transmitted human papilloma virus that causes cervical cancer, may also be linked to 1,700 "adverse reactions".

Reports from the US, where the Gardasil vaccine has been used for nearly a year in some states, reveal that three

victims died soon after receiving the injection. They were aged 12, 19 and 20.

They seem to have suffered blood clots or heart attacks. Hundreds of others suffered what could be adverse side effects, including paralysis, seizures and miscarriages.

The news comes just days after the Department of Health announced the drug would be added to the childhood immunisation programme from autumn 2008.

The findings have alarmed UK health experts. Jackie Fletcher from the vaccine damage support group Jabs, said: "Trials of this jab have mostly been on adults, so we don't have any idea of the long-term effect on children."

Dr Peter Mansfield, a former GP who runs the Good HealthKeeping clinic in Lincolnshire, said: "It's absolutely wrong that girls of 12 should be given this jab."

Dr John Oakley, a west Midlands GP said the trials for Gardasil had been so limited that the children taking it would be like "guinea pigs".

The manufacturers, Sanofi Pasteur MSD, had not planned to release the data, but it was obtained under freedom of information laws by lobbyists Judicial Watch. The findings read like "a catalogue of horrors", said its president, Tom Fitton.

Other serious possible side effects include paralysis, seizures and neurological conditions such as Bell's palsy and Guillain-Barré Syndrome, which leaves patients paralysed for months and can kill.

Gardasil has stirred up a huge controversy. There is excitement because it is the first vaccine to be approved to fight cancer – but moral campaigners say it will encourage teenagers to have sex early.

Others have argued that boys, who also carry the virus, should be vaccinated as well.

A spokesman for the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), meanwhile, said no "proven, serious new risks have been identified" by the findings, but said the effects would be monitored when Gardasil is used in the UK.

Nicholas Kitchin, medical director of Sanofi Pasteur MSD, said the fact that symptoms were reported after a vaccination did not necessarily mean they were caused by the vaccine.

What do YOU think? Should all children get this jab? Comment NOW on Have Your Say.

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