

Vets On Vaccines

By Catherine O'Driscoll

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I decided to send a questionnaire to my holistic veterinary friends after receiving an email from a veterinarian whose daughter was brain damaged by the MMR vaccine. Her email, added to conversations I have had with veterinary friends and my experience of trying to effect change at the government level, made me realize that veterinarians who challenge current vaccine policies often feel isolated and unsupported.

I devised a questionnaire and sent it to a dozen-or-so veterinarians who have spoken publicly about the over-vaccination of companion animals. Some of these veterinarians forwarded the questionnaire to colleagues in their holistic network. This was not a survey. The questions were designed to draw out the experiences and views of vets who are aware of vaccine damage. These were the questions:

Do you believe that your training in veterinary college was adequate with regard to animal vaccination? Please describe your feelings on this.

When you first went into practice, did you observe any unwanted vaccine effects in the animals you treated? Please describe.

Have you, through observation in practice, been able to correlate any particular illnesses in animals with vaccination? If so, please name the illnesses you have been able to observe.

Do you still vaccinate animals and, if so, do you have any concerns about this? If you don't still vaccinate, why not, and has this impacted your income?

Do you have any feelings about pet owners who follow advice to vaccinate annually?

Do you feel there is any professional pressure on you to keep quiet about the vaccine issue?

What are your views on the profession you belong to?

What are your views with regard to the influence the pharmaceutical industry has upon the veterinary profession?

Do you believe that the pharmaceutical industry has too much influence in veterinary teaching?

What are your views on government, and government regulators, with regard to the veterinary vaccine issue?

Do you believe that conventional veterinary medicine, with its reliance upon vaccines, steroids, NSAIDs and antibiotics is doing more harm than good?

What, in your view, are the main causes of ill health in companion animals?

The first veterinarian I'm giving voice to, however, is anonymous, and he is speaking through a client who describes his actions rather than his words. He sets the backdrop against which the other vets speak and he is possibly representative of the 50% of veterinarians in the UK who, according to British Small Animal Veterinary Association conference proceedings, still vaccinate annually. It is also illustrative of the law, which allows veterinarians to demand procedures that aren't necessary.

The veterinarian's client is a senior citizen on low income, so she takes advantage of the PDSA scheme. This is a charity in the UK which offers subsidised veterinary care.

“When I suggested to my vet that my dog didn't need an annual booster,” she said, “and that core vaccines need only be given every three years if at all, the vet asked how a layperson could possibly know anything about it, and who were these supposed experts? He wouldn't discuss the subject. When I visit my vet for check ups and refuse the annual shots, I am made to feel that I am an irresponsible pet owner.”

The lady has now received a letter from her vet telling her that unless she vaccinates annually, she will no longer be eligible for the PDSA scheme. We contacted the PDSA to ask whether this was the charity's policy and received the reply that although the PDSA does not demand annual vaccination, they leave it to participating vets to decide how often revaccination should occur.

One other veterinarian remains anonymous because her lawyer has advised this.

“My own daughter was a victim of the MMR vaccine five years ago,” she wrote. “She suffered from severe encephalitis and is permanently brain injured. She received compensation from the vaccine fund here in the USA.

“I am now out of typical veterinary practice and do only surgery, dentistry and in home hospice/ euthanasia. I was never taught in school how much damage we were doing to animals.....I guess this was God's way of opening my eyes.

“I have tried talking to veterinarians, but they have the mentality of ‘if it ain't broke, don't fix it’ as far as their businesses go. As far as their personal beliefs -many of them do not vaccinate their own dogs or cats after puppyhood. This seems hypocritical to me. I had such a moral issue with working for practices who felt this way, that I quit my job in typical practice. Most of my colleagues agreed with me that vaccines are over-used and can cause injury, but they would not change hospital protocol. When my boss went out of town for two weeks, I took it upon myself to start checking titers on those dogs whose family's would listen – and every single one of them came back protective. I showed this to my boss when he got back, and he was extremely angry with me for going against protocol.

“I turned in my notice a few weeks later – walking away from close to \$100K a year. I now make maybe \$25K a year – all very part time. It's all I can find. I need to make more money, but I refuse to go back to typical practice unless I am able to share what I know with the clients.

“Until we get the owners to question the veterinarians, nothing is going to change. It is so frustrating. And to live with the reality of the situation: screaming, crying, tantruming, in my face every day with my daughter and her permanent severe disability, I find myself in a constant state of sadness and anger and feel I need to do something to educate people – but many don't want to listen. I have lost many friends who think I have gone over the edge.”

Christopher Day MA VetMB CertIAVH VetFFHom MRCVS “I don't believe that my training in veterinary college was adequate with regard to animal vaccination. There was no real detail about the manufacture of vaccines and what constituents were involved in the different brands. There was no information to help a graduate to choose among the brands. Choice was governed by what discounts manufacturers could give on their other products and how much of the practice's stationery they would print for you. Decisions were also influenced by how much the individual companies had ‘wooed’ students during their training period. Things may however have changed in 40 years! The assumption was that vaccination was good and adverse effects were not discussed.

“When I first went into practice, I observed local lumps/abscesses, malaise, and occasional deaths post-vaccination. In my opinion, all diseases that have an immune basis crop up as associated with vaccination. This includes Allergy, Atopy, Asthma-type conditions, Cardiomyopathy, Heart valve disease, Epilepsy and MANY others. Auto-immune conditions are also involved. As a result I never vaccinate, and yes, it has seriously affected my income!

“I feel that pet owners haven’t been shown another way, they have understandable fear of abandoning what has been drilled into them and they mostly feel they are doing the best for their animals. They do not know that diet and vaccination are the main causes of disease in animals.

“I am concerned that the emphasis within the veterinary profession has shifted somewhat from a vocational care for animals and service into business considerations. The influence of the pharmaceutical industry on the profession is unhealthy. They have too much influence in veterinary teaching and government regulators don’t take the trouble to inform themselves but use ‘experts’ to advise them. Their choice of experts is from a narrow field.”

When asked if he believed that conventional veterinary medicine, with its reliance upon vaccines, steroids, NSAIDs and antibiotics is doing more harm than good, Chris replied: “That is a difficult one. It is certainly possible and could well be the subject of objective and proper research (crazy that it’s not already the subject of such research – evidence based medicine being such a rallying cry!).

“I believe that, far from following science, veterinary medicine is following belief systems. More research is desperately needed, of the kind that closely follows the results of current practices in an objective and unbiased manner. In the case of vaccination, there is no proper follow-up to see the effects. Furthermore, the SARSS Scheme (the UK veterinary adverse reaction reporting scheme) is ignored in the majority of possible incidents.”

Dr Arthur Freedman: “When I received my training, little was known about duration of immunity and vaccines. I was not informed about possible short term or long term adverse effects of vaccination. Once in practice, I observed immediate Type 1 hypersensitivity reactions (anaphylaxis, wheals, vomiting and diarrhoea). I’ve also been able to correlate seizures and autoimmune haemolytic anaemia with vaccination.

“It’s my belief that pet owners are not being informed about recent studies and are just following recommendations. The trend in traditional veterinary medicine is to utilize less steroids and antibiotics but more NSAIDs. Clients want quick relief so they need to be educated about other treatment options.

“In my practice we have reduced pet vaccinations to what we feel is important for the individual pet except for rabies which is required by law. Minimal vaccinations.

“In my view, the main causes of ill health in dogs are over-medication and over-vaccination, and poor diet. I am pleased to say that more clients are recognising the benefits of non-traditional medicine.”

Dr Stephen Blake: “I emphatically do not believe that I was taught adequately with regard to the vaccine issue. I was taught to believe vaccinations were synonymous with immunization. They are two separate entities.

“I was taught vaccines were safe and it was implied there had been safety studies done on them before they were used on the general public. They are not safe and there have not been any safety studies done on any of them.

“I was taught that if something adverse happens within a few hours after immunization it was related to the vaccines but, if it happened later than that period of time, it had nothing to do with the vaccines. The truth of the matter is vaccines can set up a latent condition that may show up within a few hours or years after immunization.

“I was taught you needed to vaccinate every year to boost animals’ immune systems. There are no studies to show that annual boosters are ever indicated or that there is any science to support annual vaccines to boost an animal’s immune system. I was never taught that mercury and aluminium hydroxide, which are in the vaccines, can cause cancer, are neurotoxins, and can trigger autoimmune disease.

“When I first went into practice, I noticed some animals developed fevers for a few days, became lethargic, lost their appetites, developed ear infections, seizures, pruritus, UTI, musculoskeletal issues, and behaviour issues after vaccination.

“As time went on, I observed that otitis, UTI, autoimmune disease complexes, gingivitis, allergic dermatitis, IBD, asthma, aggression and phobias, convulsions, paralysis, cancer, chronic conjunctivitis, liver disease, kidney disease, cardiac disease, arthritis, anterior cruciate rupture, hip disease, and corneal lesions can be correlated with vaccine damage.

“Pet guardians are being misinformed. There is no scientific evidence that annual vaccines are needed or indicated.

“I feel there is pressure at all levels of veterinary medicine that we are not to say anything negative about vaccines which would alarm the public and make it harder to sell the vaccine concept. There is no informed consent information presented to the pet owner prior to vaccination because they do not want to alarm the owner and make it difficult to promote vaccines. It has been known for over 20 years that rabies vaccines can cause terminal cancer in the feline and I have yet to meet a client who was informed of this scientific fact by their attending veterinarian. This should be made public to all cat owners prior to rabies vaccine so the owner is aware of the low risk of getting rabies compared to the high risk of getting cancer from the rabies vaccine.

“I love the practice of veterinary medicine with an oath to prevent suffering and do no harm. I do not support my profession’s over-use of drugs, chemicals and vaccines as we know them today. I feel my profession needs to be the leader in breaking away from the dangers of these products and show the human medical profession this is not healing. It does cause harm.

“I feel the pharmaceutical industry finances the veterinary schools and the veterinary profession. I feel they are the fox in the hen house that sets policy for the practice of medicine as we know it today in our country.

“The pharmaceutical industry has too much influence in veterinary teaching. Their approach to medicine prevents any other modalities of healing from being available in our veterinary schools. This is done so they have no competition for the pet industry dollars from unpatentable means.

“Conventional veterinary medicine, with its reliance upon vaccines, steroids, NSAIDs and antibiotics is doing more harm than good.

“The main causes of ill health in animals are vaccines as we know them today; drugs that are needed in an emergency situation; use of chemicals to treat fleas, ticks, lice, and heartworm; herbicides, pesticides, radiation, artificial dyes, flavouring, poor quality pet foods, contaminated water, and cleaning chemicals in homes.

“I have a dream. My dream is that alternative veterinary medicine will no longer be 11th hour medicine and that it will be the first choice of medical care for our friends the animals before I leave this world.”

Dr Jeff Feinman: “My training in vet school was not complete with regard to the harmful effects that vaccines have on the immune system. The scientific evidence was not properly explored by the eighties. Vaccines were designed to help stimulate immunity. Current research is proving just the opposite however. Even my graduate school immunology course (attended mainly by MD students) was incomplete.

“I didn’t notice vaccine reactions when I first went into practice – I wasn’t fully observant for about ten years. Now I’m able to say that arthritis, skin disease/allergies, all autoimmune diseases, and cancer can be correlated with vaccination.

“Now I will vaccinate only as required by law and then only if the animal’s internal health has already been optimized. Energetic treatment with homeopathy is extremely important both before and after vaccination, especially if there are any observed changes or ill effects after vaccination.

“Pet owners try to do their best for their pets by following their vet’s advice. Whilst I believe that annual examination and non-invasive diagnostics are indispensable, annual ‘routine’ vaccination is scientifically unfounded. Pet owners need to take more control over everything done to their beloved pets – in all situations – even when one vet says that a potentially harmful procedure is OK.

“I personally don’t feel that there’s any professional pressure on me to keep quiet about the vaccine issue. I believe that I belong to a true healing profession, mostly with good intentions but often too busy to stay current with advances in vaccinology.

“With regard to the pharmaceutical industry, I believe that it has minimal to moderate influence on the veterinary profession. Only a few companies directly influence veterinary students. They have more influence on professors by funding research studies. Increasingly aggressive marketing to pet owners is a problem, however. Marketing ‘fibs’ is one of the top ten obstacles to holistic treatment of pets.”

Dr Jean Hofve: “I was fortunate to attend Colorado State University (CSU) around the time that vaccine-associated sarcomas were ‘discovered’ in cats, so questions were beginning to be raised. I also started learning about holistic medicine in my junior year, so was more vigilant and curious about vaccine recommendations. At the time, CSU was revising its vaccine protocols, so I was never ‘sold’ on the need for annual vaccines.

“In practice, I observed allergic skin disease, asthma, vaccine-associated sarcoma, and renal failure in relation to vaccination.

“I feel sad that pet guardians are still being betrayed by the veterinary profession. Even though many leaders in the profession are now advocating fewer vaccines, at least in the US, the majority of practitioners are still ignoring the facts.

“Of course, the completely unscientific opinion that vaccines should be given every year is nothing more than a convention adopted decades ago by agreement between veterinarians and vaccine manufacturers, primarily as an excuse to get pets in for annual exams. At the time, it was believed that vaccines were harmless; now we know better. The current recommendation for core vaccines every three years is nearly as baseless, since most vaccines (distemper, parvo, and panleukopenia) are diseases of the young and rare in adults, whether vaccinated or not.

“Moreover, booster vaccines do not increase immunity; but they do increase the likelihood of harm. Vaccines are produced using animal tissue or serum; so antibodies are formed not just to the pathogen, but also to the proteins too small to be filtered out of the vaccine. These antibodies can and do cross-react with the dog’s or cat’s own tissues, causing chronic low-grade inflammation throughout the body. Every booster causes more of these antibodies to be created, thus setting the stage for autoimmune disease and immune system dysfunction.

“The inertia against change in the veterinary profession is enormous. Just recently, a discussion on a vet forum revealed one practitioner who actually asked, ‘Is over-vaccinating really a problem?’ He hadn’t ever heard anything about it. Another member said of the new AAHA (American Animal Hospital Association) guidelines, which state that core canine vaccines produce immunity that lasts at least 5 years, that it would be better if they had come from the AVMA (American Veterinary Medical Association). The forum debated the matter for weeks: are titers meaningful, do we need to change the laws or not, how ‘reliable’ are the studies showing that immunity typically lasts 5-7 years...? As the forum debate dragged on, it was clear that virtually everyone agreed that there is ‘not enough data’ to make any changes in what they are doing now—thus justifying their own desire to do nothing.

“Our pets today are sick due to poor breeding, poor nutrition, and toxic overload due in large part to over-vaccination – it’s as simple as that.”

Marcia DuBois Martin, DVM, CVA: “I have been out of school for over 20 years and don’t remember much about what we were taught on the vaccine issue, except that vaccines were very safe with the exception of some very rare vaccine reactions (anaphylaxis and urticaria) and that the diseases they protected against were very dangerous. Annual revaccination was safe and effective. I don’t remember hearing anything about duration of immunity or long term side effects.

“When I first went into practice I did see urticaria quite frequently in dogs. Fever and lethargy was fairly common in cats. Occasionally, anorexia and vomiting was observed in the dog. I was under the misguided impression that for a reaction to be vaccine related it needed to happen within 24-48 hours of the vaccine being administered.

“Once trained to recognize vaccinosis, then the light came on and yes, many illnesses appeared to be directly related to vaccine administration, such as autoimmune disease (thyroid, pancreatitis, Cushing’s, IMHA). Many times the medical history will reveal that the first seizure happened within 1-3 weeks post rabies vaccination. Cancer, especially lymphoma, seems to occur often within days of a vaccine. Colic, laminitis, anorexia are frequent adverse reactions noted in horses. In my opinion metabolic syndrome/insulin resistance is a vaccine induced disease. Anal gland abscesses and cystitis in cats are often seen within hours to days post vaccination. Looking at the human literature, I am convinced that pancreatitis is a vaccine induced disease, as is diabetes. Joint disease is being seen in younger and younger animals and is most like due to autoantibodies induced by vaccine administration.

“I still vaccinate for parvo and distemper in puppies but never together. Interval of the vaccines depends on the risk of exposure. I vaccinate healthy animals for rabies as required by law, but I see very few healthy animals. Adult vaccines are discouraged in all species I treat.

“Most pet owners are ill informed about the risk of disease in their pets versus the risk of the vaccine. Most are told the risk of exposure is significant while the risk of the vaccine is non-existent. Many are forced to vaccinate by groomers and boarding facilities (many owned by veterinary clinics) that won’t accommodate minimally vaccinated pets. The hype by the drug companies regarding the risk of West

Nile in horses is just one example of the fear mongering that goes on from both the pharmaceutical industry and the veterinarians.

“My income has been significantly impacted. Once you no longer believe in the conventional medical approach it is difficult to practice in the same way. I have found it difficult to maintain a purely holistic practice. I am, however, seeing that a large portion of the public is no longer going to the vet because they don’t want what the conventional guys have to offer: vaccines, expensive diagnostics and drugs.

“Somehow there needs to be a way for pet owners to find those of us who struggle to stay open and provide quality holistic care. If the public and their money support holistic vets, the conventional professionals will have to take notice. Money talks, after all.

“I do indeed feel pressured to keep quiet on the vaccine issue! I have been chastised by many of my colleagues for advising clients against vaccines which, to quote, are ‘the bread and butter of my practice’.

“Big pharma will kill us all eventually. The goal is to make money selling drugs that may or may not work for illnesses that may or may not exist. Government regulators are ill informed and cater to the interests of big business and lobbyists.

“By not curing the disease and covering the symptoms, the disease is allowed to continue to grow and strengthen, causing unseen damage, until finally the effects can be measured through diagnostic testing or symptoms emerge that are too strong to suppress.

“Most disease is caused by poor diet, over administration of vaccines and the over-use of pharmaceuticals to suppress symptoms.

“The public really needs to be educated about what constitutes health and wellness and to seek the medical professionals who provide true holistic therapies. Too often they go to the closest vet or the least expensive because they don’t understand the damage that is done. They need to commit to holistic care for themselves and their pets and spend their hard earned money with holistic practitioners. The industry will follow the money and only when it becomes financially viable to not vaccinate and provide drugs will things change for the better.”

British holistic vet Mark Carpenter says: “Vaccination in college was skimmed over with little discussion of potential risks involved. In practice I have seen what I believe to be vaccine related problems of skin disease (allergic); inflammatory bowel disease; and epilepsy which appear to have been triggered or coincided with vaccination.

“I do vaccinate, as many animals require vaccination for boarding / insurance purposes. Risks are discussed and vaccination intervals extended to as long as I can get away with.

“Pet owners are rarely given the opportunity to discuss vaccination issues with an unbiased professional. The motivation to annually vaccinate is love of their pets and nothing more, and anyone who does anything through genuine love and concern has the right motivation even if I believe the path taken is wrong. The same applies to vets who recommend annual vaccination; most vets who do so have only ever been taught that it is essential, and are therefore effectively brain-washed into genuinely believing that this is the right thing to do. CPD events reinforce this message by not distinguishing between minimum duration of immunity and actual likely duration, as I have personally experienced and challenged.

“The profession is very different to the one I joined in 1978. The art of veterinary practice is becoming lost in a sea of research and technology, the patient values lost in the modern ‘scientific progress’.

“The influence the pharmaceutical industry has upon the veterinary profession is frighteningly too much – as with the pet food companies. We are like a football team with a massive wage bill, at the beck and call of its billionaire owner. The cancerous increase of the control of these multi-nationals is the major reason for the falling away of the old values. Industry definitely has too big an influence on veterinary teaching. Government’s main concern is the support of major industry, not animal welfare.

“In many cases conventional veterinary medicine can be harmful, but we should not ignore it as many cases can be hugely benefited from its use.

“Much as I support the move to reduce vaccination load, I feel that the openly aggressive approach will never succeed and only antagonises. The same is true of the raw diet lobby, of which I am an active member, and the homeopathic / holistic vet groups. The only way forward is to be firm in the ideas, but respectful of those who do not agree. Direct attacks and the general demonising of the veterinary profession has never and will never be a productive way forward, and only serves to entrench our opponents, and isolate those of us vets who struggle to turn opinion even further – particularly those, like me, who continue to work within a conventional set-up, seeing conventional clients, and trying to gently persuade them to look at dietary and vaccination issues from a logical viewpoint rather than accept the dogma encouraged by the major companies.”

Dr Michael Dym: “Our training in veterinary school was not adequate with regards to immune system reactions in our animals. We were taught a one size fits all vaccination program. There was nothing taught about the chronic immune reactions that can occur weeks, months or years later after vaccination in certain susceptible animals. From personal conversation with Ron Schultz, renowned veterinary immunologist, I learned that these important concepts are not taught in modern veterinary schools.

“When I first started to practice, I did see occasional acute vaccination reactions such as facial swelling, hives, drooling and soreness. However it wasn’t until I learned about chronic vaccinosis, that I could really appreciate the chronic and damaging effect of vaccinations on so many animals.

“Since then, I have observed practically every medical illness documented to be exacerbated or caused by vaccinations. Amongst the many conditions (hardly an all inclusive list) are chronic skin allergies, hormonal problems of thyroid and adrenal glands, behavioural issues, neurological reactions including seizures, digestive problems such as chronic inflammatory bowel disease, and even tumors.

”Now I usually only vaccinate animals for parvo and distemper as 15-16 week old puppies, and then rabies only as required by law. However, once dogs are age one or over, I stop vaccinating and/or measure vaccination antibody titers instead of using the needle.

”Pet owners sadly think they are doing the right thing, due to being sadly misinformed and ignorant of the link to unnecessary vaccinations and chronic disease in our pets. The sadder fact is the ignorance of the vets who are brainwashed into thinking annual vaccinations is a do-no-harm procedure.

“I don’t personally feel any pressure to keep quiet about the vaccine issue, but I do feel it is there for well known veterinary vaccine experts like Jean Dodds and Ron Schultz, who have become very

careful how they word the facts about vaccinations because of big pressure from drug companies with big bucks. Sort of reminds me of the movie Erin Brockovich.

“I am quite disappointed in my profession’s lack of open mindedness to the true science about vaccinations and their long term potential risks, where money seems to dictate policies rather than what is best for our animals.

“The drug industry has sadly brainwashed many ignorant vets into thinking that their products such as vaccinations and pharmaceutical drugs have little side effects or chronic influence on health in potentially negative manners. I do think that the pharmaceutical industry has too much influence in veterinary teaching. Many of the government agencies also seem to be run by those who have financial interests in the drug industry.

“I believe that conventional veterinary medicine, with its reliance upon vaccines, steroids and NSAIDs, is doing more harm than good. We are seeing far deeper chronic disease and suffering – from autoimmune disease to cancer – in younger and younger pets. This was not seen nearly as much a decade back.

“Over-vaccination, nutrient poor processed commercial foods, and overuse of internal and topical pesticides for heartworm/ flea and tick prevention, all have caused epidemic levels of ill health and suffering.”

Peter Gregory, British homoeopathic vet: “I believe my training in veterinary college was adequate with regard to animal vaccination, but it was a long time ago. When I first started to practice, I occasionally noticed lethargy and diarrhoea post vaccination, but then vaccines contained fewer components, were given at a later age, and they were boosted less frequently.

“Subsequently in practice I’ve seen colitis, skin conditions including atopy, and epilepsy in relation to vaccine events. I no longer vaccinate animals as I’m in a referral practice, and I used to feel there was pressure on me to keep quiet about the vaccine issue, but I don’t feel that now. The profession is controlled by big business in the form of pharmaceutical companies and dog food companies. The temptation is to ‘go with the flow’. The responsibility of the directors of corporate chains of veterinary clinics is primarily to their shareholders, not their clients or their patients.

“It is also important to differentiate between those who control the profession and the individual vets, most of whom care deeply about the welfare of their patients, but who are trapped in a web of regulations and fear of litigation

“I’m sympathetic to pet owners who are advised to vaccinate annually. They experience a barrage of propaganda, and expect that their vet has sufficient knowledge to be able to give them the best advice. It takes a lot of courage and a strong, free-thinking mind to go against the recommendations of their vet.

“The influence the pharmaceutical and pet food industries on the veterinary profession is overwhelming, and is exerted via the European Union, the universities and an enormous PR programme. Government regulators are only as good as their advisors, who are mostly drawn from academia and the pharmaceutical companies.

“The industry also has too much influence over veterinary training, but there is an increasing movement to include some education in alternative medicines so my outlook is optimistic.”

British homeopathic vet Richard Allport agrees: “Big pharma? They’re less big and bullying in the veterinary field than the human pharma companies, but still, promoting sales is their business and that’s what they do. Vets seem to be losing their independence and are allowing themselves to be steam rolled by pressure and cajoled by ‘goodies’ into going hand in hand with big pharma.

“Vaccine correlation – well, some are proven, like vaccine associated sarcoma and auto immune haemolytic anaemia, but I also see epilepsy as a strong correlated disease. Also IBD and chronic eczema.”

Dr Richard Pitcairn: “I graduated in 1965 and what I had been presented with on the vaccine issue was not extensive. It may be more informative now.

“When I first went into practice, I saw animals ill after vaccination but we were taught that this was not from the vaccines but they were already incubating the disease. Now I understand that there are many forms of illness from vaccines. Two broad categories — immediate effects such as shock, collapse, eruptions and itching, fevers, loss of appetite, and longer term chronic effects. This latter group includes many forms of poor health but especially allergies, thyroid disorders, mouth and gum problems, chronic cystitis and kidney inflammation, food sensitivities, pancreatitis, chronic ear catarrh (usually called yeast infections), hip dysplasia, cruciate ligament deterioration, arthritis, spondylitis. In other words, many of the common chronic conditions that veterinarians see.

“I have not vaccinated animals for nigh on 30 years. It did not impact my practice because my practice was based on use of nutrition and homeopathy for correction of health problems.

“I believe my profession does its best but most do not realize that they are practicing only one form of medicine and so have limited views. As for pet owners who are advised to vaccinate annually, I wish them well.

“I think problems arise when regulators do not respect the judgment of the veterinarian as to the animal who receives vaccines. If the veterinarian thinks the vaccine not appropriate because of the health of the animal it can be overridden without understanding of the situation.

“Poor quality food, excessive use of vaccines, suppression of disease with powerful drugs (without curing), surgery to remove the effects of disease without addressing the cause – these are the main causes for ill health in animals.

“We need to have choices within the profession, that veterinarians could be trained in other than allopathic medicine. If there was true competition and demonstration in the marketplace as to the advantages of homeopathic medicine, for example, then the public would begin to understand the situation more clearly.”

Dr Rosario Delgado: “I believe the training I acquired in veterinary school was adequate for the medicine I was going to practice. When I first qualified, I observed and treated three moderate vaccine reactions which ranged from swelling on the face and severe itching shortly post vaccination. These were, as I was taught, short term reactions. It wasn’t until I learned Homeopathy that I started to be more observant and less biased about the possibility of vaccines being related to long term effects such as skin itching, allergies or worsening of existing conditions.

“Now I consider health in an animal completely differently to what I considered health to be when I first came out of school. For example, a healthy dog was one that was alert and happy even if it had otitis, pruritis and salivary staining on their paws. Now I will avoid vaccinating animals in that condition, and I don’t call them healthy.

“I have observed that when you vaccinate puppies, a percentage of them will develop puppy pyoderma (pustules in the abdomen, inner thighs and perianal area). Many of these puppies will become “skin dogs” which will lick their vulva or perianal area, feet or inner thighs. I have seen some cats that develop severe gingivitis not associated with poor teeth health – just the gingival is raw and swollen. I also have experience many dogs with ear inflammation, not necessarily ear infections but redness and sensitivity and overgrowth of natural bacteria/yeast in the ears. Things change negatively in some animals when they get vaccinated, while some have no obvious effects. Regarding rabies vaccines, at times I have seen dogs that become more aggressive or fearful after a vaccine.

“I do shelter medical care and due to the necessary ‘herd mentality’ I do vaccinate those animals. The few clients that I have I do not recommend vaccines after the puppy or kitten shots. I do not recommend routine vaccines for indoor cats at all. My animals are not vaccinated after receiving the one year rabies and the rabies booster.

“Not believing in routine vaccination has negatively affected my income since I do not feel comfortable working at a conventional clinic where I will be expected to give two to three vaccines to indoor cats, for instance. I work in shelter medicine because it is where I feel vaccines have more of a role AND because I can at least use SOME common sense and decide that the foster kittens are not vaccinated until they are four months (unless they are in the shelter then they get all vaccines). My uneasiness towards vaccines has dramatically changed my view on medicine, veterinary medicine and health.

“I think there is a moderate professional pressure (it used to be severe) to not discuss the vaccination issue. But I strongly believe that many veterinarians really feel they are doing the right thing by vaccinating. The great majority feel vaccines are harmless.

“Veterinary Medicine is going through a lot of changes, and I do think that many more veterinarians are questioning vaccines. It is unfortunate that it has become a subject of so much division. Having worked in emergency medicine and having seen plenty of parvovirus puppies, I can understand why so many veterinarians worry about not vaccinating. Vaccinating is the proper line of defense in some instances. We just need to asses it per individual.

“In the most part, veterinarians are good people. Most of us became veterinarians because we loved animals. We need to start, as we have, considering that perhaps vaccines can cause problems; start questioning the routine use of them and, from there, evolve the medicine more towards maintaining health – still including preventative medicine but understanding that this is not the main way of attaining health.

“My profession as a veterinarian is to protect animals and not to allow them to be harmed. To provide information to pet owners and farmers so that we do good to them and to teach those that will be responsible for their lives. My profession should not be influenced by how much money I can make per animal but how can I make money by teaching how to provide proper humane care for animals.

“I feel that medicine in general is influenced by pharmaceutical companies under the radar. They prey on fear and pull on pet owners’ heart strings. I think the pet food industry has more influence than pharmaceuticals. Although veterinary medicine is influenced by pharmaceuticals, human medicine is worse.

“I believe that conventional veterinary medicine relies too much on drugs and very little on anything else that should be considered – like lifestyle, husbandry and nutrition.

“All I ever wanted to do since I was young was to be a veterinarian. Now I recommend people that are looking into becoming veterinarians to really think about it and, if they do, to learn to decipher on their own what health is and how to attain it. I feel that veterinarians nowadays are too busy trying to pay loans and make a living and this makes them unable or uninterested in learning other ways to treat things.

“I feel many of the holistic veterinarians become so crazed over what we learn that they start to sound like crazy people themselves, creating a terribly negative halo over holistic medicine as a group. Too much drama and stress.

“We humans are sick and something very dramatic will have to happen (it is happening) for people to change and start looking into other ways of looking at health. Until people slow down, the use of alternative medicines / therapies will be kept in the back burner. I don't have the patience for people, so I do what I can, but I don't preach to other vets, because I can't take the look of 'she is a holistic vet' (eye roll).”

Dr Erin Zamzow: “The science on vaccination in dogs, cats and horses was not fully explored or taught at the time we were in school. I graduated in 1990. At that time, Dr. Ron Schulz had already done the research showing that there was no scientific basis for yearly vaccination in dogs and cats. Why was this not emphasized? For years I questioned this practice, knowing that there could not be any reason other than fear and financial gain for yearly or even every three year vaccines in dogs and cats. Part of my disillusionment with veterinary school is due to this obvious oversight in teaching about the science of vaccines and the immune system interactions and what is best for our patients.

“I observed vaccine reactions when I first went into practice. Some animals have painful swellings after vaccinations (some in horses to the point they could not put their heads down to eat and could not move without pain), go off feed (this happened in a couple of horses, very risky in this species), vomiting in some dogs and cats, lethargy in many animals for one to four days after vaccination. I had clients call the office describing reactions they thought might be related to vaccines such as pruritus, hot swellings, vomiting and/or diarrhoea. When I queried my employer, the reactions were passed off as coincidental and unrelated to the vaccinations.

“When I started seeing the vaccine induced fibrosarcomas in cats, I became even more convinced of the danger of vaccinating too often or for too many diseases.

“When the West Nile vaccination first came out, I was talked into vaccinating some horses even though I was not confident that the vaccine was safe or effective. One of the horses I vaccinated was a pregnant mare and even though I was assured by the vaccine company that it was okay to vaccinate pregnant mares, this mare ended up losing her foal. I can't say for sure this was related to the vaccine but there was a time frame correlation. I have also observed some horses that seemed to develop hind end weakness almost to the point of ataxia within a couple weeks of their second West Nile vaccination. I did not give these vaccines to these horses so cannot say for sure that the vaccine was the cause but did observe horses that manifested these problems after having the West Nile vaccine and did not appear to have any other neurologic disease.

“I can recall a few dogs over the years that had severe seizures and weakness post vaccination but I can't recall any dates or names as it was many years ago and I stopped vaccinating frequently fairly early in my post school career. Some skin allergies have seemed to develop post vaccination but again, the correlation is difficult to make. I have observed many cats that have vaccine induced fibrosarcomas in the neck area.

“I adopted a more holistic approach to animal health many years ago. I still do vaccinate for puppy and kitten core vaccines and for tetanus in horses but do not do so frequently and feel that yearly or even every three year vaccines create more of a health hazard to animals than protection against disease. I feel vaccination should be done very judiciously and with the animals’ overall health as the highest priority. I don’t feel this has affected my income as I went in another direction and clients seek me out because of the services I provide for their animals. Making money doing something that was potentially harmful to my patients doesn’t work for me.

“I feel pet owners are undereducated on the issue of vaccination and the scientific evidence that reveals the harmful nature of this practice. They are most likely operating on fear of disease and old advice from vets that did not know the science in years past. I think it is hard for an owner to realize that their vet may have been giving them incorrect information if they have a history of trust and respect for their vet.

“Since I work for myself and holistic vet medicine is my focus, I don’t feel obliged to keep quiet about vaccine dangers and frequently educate my clients on this issue or direct them to papers and research that can better inform them.

“I think most of the vets I know personally do want to do what is best for their patients but also make a decent living at what they do. I do not feel good about the veterinary profession as a whole not speaking out and educating more widely about appropriate vaccinations (and there is always going to be disagreement about exactly what that is), animal welfare, pet overpopulation and other issues. The fact that the AVMA does not speak out loudly against factory farming or over-breeding of cats, dogs and horses puts me at odds with some of the ethics of our profession at a national level yet I feel very aligned in purpose with the vets I meet at the American Holistic Vet Med Association meetings, International Veterinary Acupuncture Society and Veterinary Botanical Medical Association functions and through their list serves.

“I have the highest respect for vets who are willing to stand up for their ethics even if it goes against the majority of vets. I have respect for any vet who tries to keep current on issues and is doing their very best to help their patients and be ethical and honest.

“The pharmaceutical industry has too much influence and has too much to lose by not revealing the truth about vaccination and the dangers of some medications to be truthful about these things. Pharmaceutical companies should have nothing to do with veterinary schools as far as influencing what is taught, just as dog food companies should not be part of the nutritional instruction at veterinary schools.

“Conventional drugs can in some cases be harmful, but I think there is a great need, just as in human medicine, for critical care, orthopaedics, and so on. Holistic vets can do harm too. It all comes down to the judicious and appropriate use of whatever treatment is offered. I would say in general, the way most conventional practices are run, there is harm done by too many vaccinations and too many chemicals that potentially harm the animals and certainly contribute to the toxins in the ecosystem.

”In my view, the main causes of ill health in companion animals are poor/inappropriate diet (such as most commercial kibble), over-vaccination and environmental toxicity.”

Dr Patricia Jordan, holistic veterinarian and vaccine researcher: “We had no training on vaccination – even those teaching us didn’t know. I wasn’t taught very much in immunology either. This is why Dr. Ron Schultz says, and I agree with him, that veterinary medical doctors have no business making vaccine recommendations as they do not have enough education in vaccinology or immunology. Unfortunately that also goes for those teaching the senior students! I would carry this over to the

medical doctors and pediatricians. None of them should be making vaccine recommendations. I wouldn't allow the vaccine companies to make the call either. Nor the regulatory agencies since they don't even know what it is they are regulating/licensing. This is the inconvenient truth.

"It wasn't until 2007, and over 25 years after starting veterinary school, that I had the first lecture about vaccine-induced disease. This was a talk by Dr. Ron Schultz and although adverse events were already suspected by myself and others, his lecture contained the first admission I encountered.

"I can see now that the immune system is reactionary and only has so many ways to respond to immune threats. Vaccines are not a natural threat – not even natural in the expression they generate in the gene profile. I have come to find the diseases from allergies, asthma, atopy, anaphylaxis, eczema, Type I-IV hypersensitivity reactions, cancer, all the autoimmune diseases, Cushing's, Addison's, hypothyroid, obesity; heart, liver, kidney disease; vision problems, cell mediated immunity problems; bacterial, viral, fungal, yeast infections, parasites, internal and external, skin parasites, inter and extra-cellular pathogens like Lyme Disease and Leptospirosis, cytotoxic t cells, all manners of heart disease – all of these and many more are vaccine induced disease. Early aging is vaccine disease, as are anal gland problems, pancreatic problems – all of this can be vaccine induced

"I will no longer vaccinate. I see no reason to infect animals. The toxins in vaccines make no sense to me and the vaccines are contaminated with other viruses, xenotropic viruses, genetically engineered viruses, virions, prions and who knows what else. They all have mycoplasma. We are adulterating the genome in ways we don't even recognize or admit. Vaccination is not legitimate, it is not ethical medicine.

"By following the advice of their vets, pet owners are responsible for cumulative damage that I believe most will come to regret.

"Is there any pressure on me to keep quiet about the vaccine issue? Yes, always. Maybe this is because I have researched the science thoroughly, and am horrified by what I see, and maybe it's because I speak the truth – and some people don't like the truth.

"The profession I belong to has been subverted by the pharmaceutical industry; the industry rules over who gets funding, advertising, who gets to publish research. Government and the pharmaceutical industry are a marriage of power and money; an unholy marriage that is not for the people or even for the people's pets, it is for their investors.

"In Orange County California, I met a conventional practicing veterinarian who said, 'I have a two million dollar a year practice that is vaccine based and I am afraid they are going to take that away from me'. The key issue here is that the older vets appear to be married to the money and unwilling to consider change. The 'business' – the 'family business' – has somehow found dignity and honor in protecting the right to make big bucks selling and doing things that do not promote health but instead promote the bottom line for the practice, the vet, the profession, and of course the drug companies who are only beholden to their investors.

"Conventional veterinary medicine, with its reliance upon vaccines, steroids, NSAIDs and antibiotics is doing more harm than good. Drugs are the answer from the drug companies for vaccine-induced diseases. What these drug companies have discovered is how to make a drug to temper the out-of-control immune response they first made with vaccines. They are mercenaries not heroes.

"The main causes of ill health in companion animals are the feeding of an unnatural diet in combination with unnatural vaccine immune assaults, along with environmental pollution.

”This problem in America is now responsible for diseasing any country that adopts the West’s way of doing business. We are holding up a broken system that needs to be destroyed. Vaccines are the gold standard of allopathic medicine and yet they are all illegitimate and invalidated, unscientific, and non evidence based medicine. It is NOT the way.”

Dr Ronna S Kabler: My training on the vaccine issue was completely inadequate. We learned the science of immunology and how vaccines work, but no science as relates to the actual practice of vaccinating animals. As a new vet in private practice, it was like one was brainwashed or on autopilot. It was as if any immunology training was quickly forgotten. ‘All dogs and cats needed their immunizations in a timely manner.’ There was no thought that we were possibly doing any damage.

“When I first went into practice I saw anaphylactic reactions causing shock, vomiting and diarrhea, facial swelling and itchiness. Also high fevers and lethargy the day after, and lumps at the vaccine site. Because I was conventionally trained, (as all other American vets at the time), I was completely oblivious to the fact that vaccines were associated with a multitude of reactions and illnesses.

“An individual’s response to vaccination is all about susceptibility. If the animal is not healthy to begin with, even one vaccine can tweak it enough to bring up symptoms. Even in ‘healthy animals’, if their immune systems are overwhelmed by over-vaccination, they are very likely to develop vaccine-induced disease.

“So what have I seen – anaphylactic reactions, encephalitis-like symptoms, behaviour changes, immune-mediated diseases including autoimmune hemolytic anemia, autoimmune thrombocytopenia, immune mediated meningitis/vasculitis, inflammatory bowel disease and other digestive disorders, lower urinary tract disease in cats, skin tumors, cancer, chronic skin problems, chronic ear inflammation. The list goes on and on.

“I wish I could say that I never had to give another vaccine ever again.

“I have for the most part walked away from conventional medicine. I promote holistic care for animals (and people) and practice classical homeopathy.

“If I do vaccinate an animal, I follow the recommendations of Dr. Ronald Schultz and Dr. Jean Dodds. Thus, I give the minimum that will afford the maximum protection. So, I will give a dog one distemper and one parvo vaccine when they are over 12 weeks. One rabies at 6 months of age, followed in a year by one more. Cats – one panleukemia after 12 weeks, and same protocol as above for rabies to comply with the laws in our state.

“After that, I recommend antibody titers to assess the animal’s response to the vaccines. It is difficult with rabies, since each state dictates how often animals should be vaccinated. But it is completely unethical to give a vaccine to an animal unless it is healthy. And guess what, most animals are really not that healthy any more! So I will not, under any circumstances, give a vaccine to an animal that has any symptoms what so ever.

“Pet owners need to be educated that giving the core vaccines annually is harmful to their animals and will not add to their protective status. It is difficult because doctors are supposed to have all the answers, which is an obvious fallacy.

“There so much misinformation, ignorance and fear out there. I personally feel compelled to educate as many people as I can. It can be difficult when most still believe the earth is flat. But I find more and more people realize the potential hazards of over-vaccination and want to do something about it.

“I still believe that the idea of being an animal physician is a noble calling, but the reality is something else. I have grown extremely disenchanted and have a lot of negative feelings about my profession and conventional medicine in general. Conventional or allopathic medicine does not necessarily lead one to health. Animals are over-vaccinated, pumped with suppressive drugs and toxic pesticides, and fed adulterated food. Conventional medicine adds to illness, it does not promote true health. The whole paradigm of allopathic medicine is flawed.

“Obviously, the veterinary profession is owned by the pharmaceutical industry, as is the human medical field. The pet food companies also have way too much influence. Holistic medicine is cutting edge – every veterinary school should be offering these studies!

“Conventional drugs only suppress symptoms and do not cure disease. And we don’t have to say much about the catastrophic results of overuse of antibiotics. Conventional medicine doesn’t know much about promoting health, it seems.

“Ill health comes from poor breeding, over-vaccination (and remember, vaccine-induced disease can be inherited), processed diets, suppression of symptoms with drugs, use of toxic pesticides, environmental toxins and stress.”

Dr Liz Fernandez: We weren’t taught adequately about vaccines in vet school. We were told that we could not over-vaccinate: ‘better safe than sorry’. We were given information on virology but not on how vaccines actually work or any studies or rigorous research data. We did get the information on hive like reactions in a very small subset of the population.

“In retrospect, vaccine reactions were staring right at me. However, I was very brainwashed into believing that they were safe (except for the obvious type 1 hypersensitivity reaction) so I did not connect the dots. Now I can see it in a cat with a splenic mast cell tumour, multiple cases of AIHA, a recent ear margin vasculitis, and I suspect chronic skin disease, colitis and arthritis.

“Now I only vaccinate rarely, partially due to the nature of my practice. I make less than 1% of my income from vaccines. I use the motto that Dr. Steve Marsden shared: I vaccinate by ‘prescription only’ meaning each case is decided on an individual need basis

“I don’t feel any pressure to keep quiet about the vaccine issue. I love the veterinary profession. I do not agree with everyone within the profession, just as I do not agree with everyone in the USA. I have my own practice and follow my own ethical compass. I tell people my opinion and the facts as I understand them. I do not bad mouth other veterinarians with different opinions. I get many referrals from the local veterinary community and specialty practice. This indicates to me that they respect my opinion too.

“Big pharma is an unfortunate reality for society. I do not have much respect for any organization that believes its only responsibility is to make a profit. Many of the scientists working in these organizations are motivated by much more altruistic ideals, but I believe the industry has too much influence on veterinary teaching.

“My view is that illness in companion animals is caused by diet, over-vaccination, environmental pollution, and taking on the stress of their people.”

Dr Ihor Basko: “We weren’t taught adequately on immunology; immunology is very difficult to understand. Vaccine companies influence how this is taught.

“When I first went into practice, I was not paying attention to anything that walked out of the office. If they had a reaction, they usually had hives, itchiness, or went into shock. But this was rare. We did not connect other diseases such as allergies and autoimmune diseases to vaccinations in the 1970s.

“I’ve observed that autoimmune haemolytic anaemia, skin allergies and allergic problems, ear infections, and tumours from the FeLV vaccine, come through over-vaccinating, giving vaccines when the animal was sick, and giving vaccines with other drugs such as flea products, and/or anaesthesia. I now follow Dr. Schultz’s recommendations. As for pet owners who are advised to vaccinate annually – find another veterinarian.

“It’s frowned upon, and politically incorrect, to tell other vets that they are vaccinating too much, including the sick, dogs with allergies....it’s a money maker! I like the wholistic veterinarians....the rest need help. Mostly, they use too many drugs and vaccines for the good of the pets, and most believe they are doing no harm....but they are. I think Dr. Schultz and Dr. Jean Dodds work should be mandatory in vet schools.

“Basically, most conventional vets do not want to examine the vaccine issue more deeply, because it brings them more income.

“It’s obvious that the pharmaceutical industry influences drug and vaccine policies with its large number of lobbyists in Washington; the industry has too much influence on veterinary teaching. Revolving door policies allow former drug and vaccine employees to work for the FDA and visa versa. Our government cannot be trusted. Because the pharmaceutical lobby in Washington gives so much money to both parties, the Truth has a difficult time coming out.

“What’s not talked about is how vaccines are made, how they may become contaminated by other diseases, besides containing harmful adjuvants; also the push to vaccinate every dog, cat, horse and human by vaccine companies to make more money, and the damage that has occurred from over-vaccination.

“The good news is that more and more younger veterinarians, out in practice 3 to 5 years, are starting to ‘get it’ and want more information on the negative effects of vaccinations that no one wants to talk about. They realize it’s about economics not health when working for other veterinarians. The vaccine protocols are automatic with little to no evaluation put into whether it is appropriate or not for the individual animal. Reminder cards are sent to clients yearly urging vaccinations. Animals are vaccinated ‘en masse’. There is hope on the horizon for better quality medicine and not just ‘shot giving’.”

Dr Christina Chambreau: “Our training was incomplete and confusing. We learned about long lasting immunity in immunology, but later in clinics were told to give yearly. We were not taught to learn and question – just to memorize.

“Since becoming an integrative veterinarian, I can say there is no disease that I have not connected to vaccines in certain animals. Behavior, asthma, autoimmune, cancer and tumors, skin, demodex, thyroid disorders, DM, DI, Addisons, Cushing’s, allergies, heart murmurs, lameness, anal gland disorders, liver, pancreas, IBD, UTI, acute renal failure... I would say that the vaccines administered so frequently over the last few decades are the main cause of illness in our animals.

“Animal guardians are not being informed of recent studies and just follow recommendations without thinking for themselves and asking questions. Education is the key to changing how guardians, and then veterinarians, care for their animals.

“I don’t feel any pressure to keep quiet about the vaccine issue. Like any profession, it is made up of individuals, mostly very caring people who believe their approach is the best. Some are just looking for money. Many are too busy to really think about new approaches. Since the internet, many are open to looking at alternatives. I had over 100 attend a holistic lecture at the local veterinary association and they were all very interested. A few followed through with more questions.

“I do think there are a lot of politics and lobbying by the manufacturers involved with the profession, as is true for most professions. The pharmaceutical industry promotes many vaccines and drugs of questionable efficacy or need, and it has too much influence in veterinary teaching. The government regulations are slow to change.

“The main cause of ill health in companion animals is a lack of understanding about the process of illness and healing, which leads to demand for quick fixes from drugs and vaccines. When people learn how to build up the immune system and how quick fixes and vaccines weaken the immune system, they begin to make different choices and find the veterinarians willing to support their choices.

“There is definitely an improvement in diet by many guardians, and more clients or public at large are realizing the benefits of the variety of healing methods available.”

Anonymous BVSc, Australia: “When I first went into practice, I observed local pain, swelling, oedema and anaphylaxis, fever, GME, and seizures post-vaccination. Subsequently, I have also observed atopy, muscular-skeletal trigger point pain, fasciitis, and malaise.

“I now give puppy and kitten shots and some first year boosters, plus intranasal kennel cough as required, based on the situation annually – for example boarding kennels, as well as when antibody titres are low.

“Feelings and belief have no place in science. Pet owners are misled; facts and science need to be shown and given to pet owners so they can make their own informed decisions.

“The veterinary profession is a wonderful profession, full of very caring and intelligent individuals who love animals and are doing the best they can given their circumstances and the material fed to them by the pharmaceutical industry. However, I do feel a pressure to keep my views on the vaccine issue quiet.

“The pharmaceutical industry is a business – a business that has too much influence on veterinary teaching. Government regulators are ineffectual with regard to the vaccine issue.

“Integrative medicine is based on science, and vaccines, steroids, NSAIDs and antibiotics all have their place when used appropriately, and are effective tools in holistic healthcare. Conventional medicine would do well to add complementary protocols, including herbal helpers, antioxidants, healthful raw and natural diets, Chinese medicine and acupuncture, and supplemental medicine to their regime.

“Emotive marketing by groups like PETA and Veganism, and blaming veterinarians for following pharmaceutical guidelines creates ill-will and reluctance to change. Lets see more great headlines like ‘PETA applauds Veterinarians for Animal Welfare’ and ‘Thousands of animals in Australia would have died of parvovirus had veterinarians not organised puppy vaccinations for parvo’ and ‘Aussie vets are ahead of the world in natural health care: they recommend raw meaty bones over processed pap’.”

Dr Charissa Smith: “I am a 1968 Graduate of Sydney University. This was at the time of the big distemper outbreak, and vaccines were relatively new. Our training was exemplary, complicated and thorough. We also had three full years of very intensive training in nutrition and biochemistry, as well as epidemiology. My feelings were total depression at my own inadequacy.

“When I first went into practice, I saw one adverse vaccine effect once, where there was a blue eye following hepatitis vaccination. At this time vaccination was not recommended yearly, and parvovirus was unknown. Kennel cough was not treated as a serious disease and animals recovered by themselves, and chemical exposure was minimal compared to today, as were the purebred pets.

“Since then, I have observed worsening of most severe immune conditions at 2-3 weeks after vaccination, some fatally as in autoimmune collapse with increased platelet and IV coagulation in the 24 hours afterwards; others such as worsening or aggravation of existing arthritis, posterior paresis, liver disease, kidney disease, allergic skin disease. Such reactions may self-heal in a few days or may need treatment. However it is not possible to be sure that this is all due to the vaccine as there are complicating variables such as food and shelter which I am not able to observe with my own eyes.

“It is rare to have a perfectly healthy dog develop symptoms after a sensible vaccination program. However, repeated vaccinations can lead to immune mediated thyroiditis in the two weeks after the vaccination in 2-4 year olds, in susceptible breeds such as German Shepherds. By the time I have seen these animals they have usually been treated for skin allergies for a number of years, have normal T4 , and the condition shows on further testing. I usually hear a history of it starting in the two weeks after the 3rd-4th vaccination, which could be called hearsay.

“I vaccinate where it is appropriate, and titre test where possible. I consider vaccination to be a useful tool, but aim to minimise its use. This has not affected my income – yearly titre testing is valuable.

“With regard to pet owners who follow advice to vaccinate annually, I am not here to have feelings, although these are part of my humanity. I am here to make a clinical judgement for the individual case to the best of my ability. Vaccination cannot be considered a generalised practice, as in doing the same thing for each animal. Needs are different according to exposure, health, age and breed. Owners are the carers of their pets and I am there to advise them, not to govern them. If people have been advised to vaccinate annually they have chosen to visit a vet who considers this the best practice for them.

“If anyone tried to pressure me to keep quiet about the vaccine issue, I wouldn’t take any notice of them. People are always pressuring other people about everything! However, me forcing my views on someone else makes me the same as the others trying to force them on me. I work out of Greencross, who recommend yearly vaccination. They have never tried to stop my titre testing, and have been wholly supportive of me offering an alternative viewpoint.

“The veterinary profession is a large group of people, all intelligent, and therefore there is a huge range of behaviours and opinions on everything. I see no point in apportioning blame.

“The pharmaceutical industry has a large influence on the veterinary profession because they control the funds. Someone always does this. Some of the influence is wonderful, and some not so good. We must all remain proactive and think for ourselves, and understand that if you invest, you need to make a profit, and not let us stop our thinking because this is so.

“The government is in a difficult position. If people just stop vaccinations epidemics are more likely. The media hype can give disinformation, both positive and negative. I think they are caught between

a rock and a hard place. Individual prescription of vaccine takes a lot of time, and many people won't be bothered, they just want their shots and to go home. If they have a low parvo titre and have to vaccinate, some get cross and feel they wasted their money. I am very much against forcing people to vaccinate; however the pressure is also coming from insurance companies. No insurance if you are not covered for risk.

“I think that veterinary medicine has moved beyond vaccines, steroids, NSAIDs and antibiotics, although it is difficult to be sure.

“In my view, the main causes of ill health in companion animals are genetics (the pet breeding industry), inadequate exercise and companionship, malnutrition or over feeding, and chemical exposure.”

Dr Judy Jasek: “My training was different to what I have come to believe is appropriate in my own practice. We were trained in vaccination protocols per veterinary school and manufacturer recommendations. We were not, however, educated in the potential long-term effects of vaccinations.

“When I first went into practice, I noticed the occasional local reaction – a lump or bump at the injection site, sometimes hives. Since then, through observation in practice, I have most definitely seen unwanted vaccine effects. I have come to believe that many so-called idiopathic diseases are, indeed, caused by vaccines. I always look at the timing of onset of disease with past vaccination history. I also find that some conditions, particularly skin disease may also flare up on the anniversary date of the vaccination.

“Diseases I have come to associate with vaccinations include skin disease ‘allergies’, which can actually be the body trying to detox; behavioral changes such as phobias and aggression – especially after the Rabies vaccination; vestibular disease – one of the best examples of a disease with ‘no known cause’, yet very few veterinarians will even acknowledge the possibility that it could be a vaccine-related illness; seizures; autoimmune anemias and thrombocytopenias; chronic intestinal disease – especially those that do not respond to any standard treatment.

“I educate my clients on the laws and disease risk. Rabies is still required by law and many people are not comfortable letting this go. I do not, however, feel that it is necessary from a disease prevention standpoint here in Colorado. I also offer homeopathic remedies to help pets detox after the vaccination.

“I educate clients about keeping puppies healthy with or without vaccines and I also offer nosodes as an alternative. For those that do choose to vaccinate, I encourage titers rather than boosters if possible. Once I educate these clients, they are happy to back off on the frequency of vaccinations. I believe that poor nutrition and over-vaccinating are the main causes of ill health in animals. These can eliminate the animal's own ability to heal and thrive.

“Initially, decreasing vaccinations impacted my income dramatically – it is a mainstay of the traditional veterinary business model. After the initial decline, however, I now see more clients because I do not push vaccines and recommend them on a case by case basis only.

“I don't feel that there's any pressure from the veterinary profession to keep quiet on the vaccine issue. Most will respect another's right to practice as they choose. I do feel, however, that if too much voice was raised about the vaccine issue, there may be more pressure from the pharmaceutical companies to stay quiet – they are the REAL money-makers, not the veterinarians. They are the ones

with the creative, persuasive marketing that convinces veterinarians and pet owners that the vaccines are necessary.

“I am honoured to be able to help pets live a better life, and I believe that all veterinarians have the pet’s best interest at heart. We do, however, have the necessity to make money, and without the proper education regarding the hazards of vaccines, they are a very profitable way to do this.

“The pharmaceutical industry has way too much influence on the veterinary profession. I believe the pharmaceutical companies run the traditional side of veterinary medicine – from educating veterinarians about prescription diets, medications, and of course vaccinations, paying for CE courses, buying staff lunches, etc. Veterinarians are trained from day one to use their products. I can tell you from personal experience that it takes a LOT of outside the box thinking to break out of the mold. In the defense of other vets, we are led down that path and trained that this is the best way to treat pets.

“With regard to government legislators, I believe that money talks, and although I have no direct proof, I have very little doubt that legislation is to some extent dictated by involvement of the pharmaceutical companies.”

Dorothea Hofman BVSc (Hons) IVAS: I don’t believe my training in vaccination was adequate at college. Other options and the side effects of vaccination were never mentioned – only the ‘benefits’ of vaccination were ever discussed.

“When I first went into practice, I observed one dog in particular that was normal at presentation, and then after vaccination suffered acute visual loss which never returned to normal. The most scary thing about vaccination is the improvement in dogs’ health, particularly skin conditions, when one ceases vaccinating them. I have also seen acute onset of GME conditions post vaccination in a boxer.

“Now I only vaccinate puppies and kitten if specifically required. Adults are then encouraged to be titre tested for immunity. If required they are given a triennial vaccination of the C3 component. We do not routinely do kennel cough vaccines. Cats are vaccinated if kennelling is required. We will also give letters to clients if their dogs/cats are not ‘normal and healthy’ and therefore are excluded from the vaccination criteria.

“I feel that many pet owners are forced or convinced to vaccinate yearly by false practices within the profession. Some people are ignorant of other options and if veterinarians do not provide options, the client continues to believe they are doing the right thing. Veterinarians should know better and are in my opinion perpetuating an ignorant client for their own financial gain.

“Another problem with vaccination seems to be the disregard for licensing requirements that vaccines be given to ‘healthy patients’. Animals with pre-existing skin conditions, auto-immune disease, dental disease, Cushing’s disease as examples are not ‘healthy’ yet I repeatedly see these animals being vaccinated when in my opinion they should not be. We also see many animals that are vaccinated when being desexed or having other procedures done and, in my opinion, these animals are not healthy since many will be given medications such as anti-inflammatory or antibiotics post surgery. Unfortunately I call this the ‘while you are here syndrome’ and it seems to be increasing in prevalence. If the animal must have a vaccine at least give it to the patient when the level of physical stress is less once they are recovered.

“I am sure other veterinarians hate my attitude on vaccines, but the internet can be a wonderful tool for knowledge and eventually word will get around. They will be proven to be the ones at fault and look to be more money orientated than they are even now.

“I am disappointed with the ethics of the veterinary profession in general and the ‘over servicing’ that is infiltrating the profession. Now cat castrations are often given pre-aesthetic blood checks and fluids, purely to increase the cost to the client. Many clients are made to feel guilty if they do not agree to these extras. Some practices are telling their clients that they must not love their animals enough to give them these extra services.

“The pharmaceutical industry has a responsibility to change since they offer bonus schemes to vets relating to many products. The industry probably has too much influence on the veterinary profession. The Australian government, and government regulators, are towing the pharmaceutical line and restricting freedom of choice in all aspects of medicine. The Australian government now withholds parenting payments from families with non-vaccinated children. This is blackmail.

“Conventional veterinary medicine appears to be doing more harm than good, and most illness in animals is caused by poor diet and over-treatment with vaccines and drugs.

“I would love to think the situation will change but there are only a few lone voices out there and we are in danger of being regulated out of business.”

W. Jean Dodds DVM, long time vaccinology expert: “I don’t really believe my training in veterinary college was adequate with regard to animal vaccination. To be fair to current knowledge, I graduated from veterinary college in Canada in 1964. At that time we understood much less about the molecular aspects of immunology, and the long term medical effects of vaccinations, both beneficial and potentially harmful. We also had fewer infectious diseases to treat and prevent, and hence fewer vaccines for them.

“I was always a clinical research scientist, but colleagues and pet owners would tell me about malaise and illness that appeared shortly after pet animals were vaccinated. This was in addition to the rare case of anaphylaxis induced by vaccination. They spoke about irritability, low-grade or even high fever, anorexia, stiffness, and occasional seizure-like episodes. These usually occurred from 2-10 days post-vaccination, sometimes longer (up to 45 days).

“The clinical signs associated with vaccine reactions typically include fever, stiffness, sore joints and abdominal tenderness, susceptibility to infections, neurological disorders and encephalitis, collapse with autoagglutinated red blood cells and icterus (autoimmune hemolytic anemia) (AIHA), or generalized petechiae and ecchymotic hemorrhages (immune-mediated thrombocytopenia) (ITP).1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 12, 13

“Hepatic enzymes may be markedly elevated, and liver or kidney failure may occur by itself or accompany bone marrow suppression. Furthermore, MLV vaccination has been associated with the development of transient seizures in puppies and adult dogs of breeds or cross-breeds susceptible to immune-mediated diseases especially those involving hematologic or endocrine tissues (e.g. AIHA, ITP, autoimmune thyroiditis). 1,7,10 Post-vaccinal polyneuropathy is a recognized entity associated occasionally with the use of distemper, parvovirus, rabies and presumably other vaccines. 2, 3, 7 This can result in various clinical signs including muscular atrophy, inhibition or interruption of neuronal control of tissue and organ function, muscular excitation, incoordination and weakness, as well as seizures. 7

“Certain breeds or families of dogs appear to be more susceptible to adverse vaccine reactions, particularly post-vaccinal seizures, high fevers, and painful episodes of hypertrophic osteodystrophy (HOD). 7, 9 Vaccination of pet and research dogs with polyvalent vaccines containing rabies virus or rabies vaccine alone was recently shown to induce production of antithyroglobulin autoantibodies, a

provocative and important finding with implications for the subsequent development of hypothyroidism. 10

“Furthermore, injection site fibrosarcomas have recently been documented in dogs as well as cats, and other cancers such as leukemia have been vaccine-associated.” 7, 18

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“If I was in private practice today, I would only use a conservative puppy or kitten series (2-3 doses only) of vaccines: one before 12 weeks in puppies and 10 weeks in kittens; and a second between 14-16 weeks in puppies and 12-14 weeks in kittens. All vaccines should be 3-4 weeks apart. I would not vaccinate beyond the puppy and kitten series, and I would not worry about income impact, regardless, as our veterinary oath requires that we “do no harm”. Judicious use of vaccines is paramount.

“I don't feel any professional pressure to keep quiet on the vaccine issue. I've been teaching it for more than 40 years! It must be understood that this is an educational problem that needs to start with the veterinarian so that he or she can educate the clients and public in general.

“I totally embrace my profession and always have, but the pharmaceutical industry has considerable influence on it; there is a huge marketing effort here – that's their job. We are the ones that need to ‘sift’ this information appropriately. We, the consumer professionals, have allowed this influence to go unchecked. It's time for senior members of our profession to step up and place controls on the commercial influence upon relatively naive veterinary students and new graduates. This influence is even stronger in the pet food and supplements industry. The government also needs to be more proactive and keep up to date.

“With regard to traditional veterinary products such as steroids, NSAIDs, preventatives and antibiotics, we as professionals using these products need to more effectively reign-in commercialism.

“The culprits behind ill health in companion animals are environmental factors, including drugs, chemicals, pesticides, toxins and preventatives like vaccines and those used to control fleas, ticks, and heartworms, superimposed on genetic predisposition. This is especially problematic for inbred and linebred breeds of dogs and cats, which are more genetically alike, and can respond adversely to any one or more of these immunological ‘insults’.”