

August 18, 2010

Study will look at vaccine effectiveness

EDMONTON – Parents of two-month-old Aboriginal infants are invited to participate in a research study designed to examine the effectiveness in the aboriginal population of a licensed vaccine against six childhood diseases.

Alberta Health Services is conducting a study in the Edmonton area to measure the effectiveness of the vaccine INFANRIX hexa™ in aboriginal infants. INFANRIX hexa™ offers immunization for infants against the diseases of diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, poliomyelitis, hepatitis B and hemophilus influenzae diseases including meningitis, epiglottitis and pneumonia.

There is a possibility that the vaccine is not as effective in aboriginal children as it is in the general population. Dr Preedy's study will aim to either confirm that suggestion, or rule it out. Results from this study may help to inform disease control programs, the use of vaccines at various ages and the use of combination vaccines

The vaccine is designed to offer the same protection as another vaccine currently used in Alberta (Pediace), with added protection against hepatitis B.

"Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent childhood diseases and this vaccine has been given to over 28 million children around the world," says Dr. Gerry Preedy, Principal Investigator and Alberta Health Services Senior Medical Officer of Health

INFANRIX hexa™ is licensed in Canada but has never been studied specifically in the aboriginal population. Some evidence suggests that there are differences in the way various populations respond to vaccines.

Parents will have access to study nurses, as well as to Dr. Preedy throughout the study. Parents will also be reimbursed for out of pocket costs (e.g. parking, gas) related to their voluntary participation.

Once available, results of the study will be shared with parents of all participating infants, and summarized study results will be provided to Aboriginal community leaders.

Interested parents may call 780.342.0186 for more information.

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