



# Homeopathy International

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**Release – Position Statement**

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## **Vaccination and informed consent**

The position of Homeopathy International (HINT) on vaccination and informed consent is simple and straightforward and is in line with the current legal situation in the UK. People must be free to make decisions about their health and their children's health, and they must have all the information required to reach their decisions.

HINT is pro children and pro informed consent, in full agreement with UK law. It is not "anti vaxx", a phrase increasingly used to demean the undecided.

The injection of foreign substances into the body of an adult or child should only be done as an elective procedure, with the fully informed consent of the adult concerned, or in the case of a child, the parents of the child. (There may be emergencies necessitating immediate injection of possible lifesaving medications, where informed consent is impracticable. This proviso is not applicable to elective vaccination.)

Fully informed consent involves the provision of information about possible benefits, and possible adverse effects and complications, of a planned procedure. Since the Montgomery judgment in the UK Supreme Court in 2015, UK law has been clarified, removing the Bolam test as an indicator of the adequacy, or otherwise, of the information and management provided by doctors. (1) Since 2015, it is necessary for doctors to provide a comprehensive account of the possible adverse effects, however rare, of a procedure, which a reasonable person in the patient's position might wish to know. Leaflets and videos cannot replace meaningful dialogue. Furthermore, "...doctors must not withhold information simply because they disagree with the decision the patient is likely to make if given that information." (2) In recent years the courts have awarded large damages, when doctors were judged not to have provided sufficient information to enable valid informed consent to be given. (2,3)

HINT agrees with the current UK legal position. Unless adults and the parents of young children are made fully aware of all material risks, they cannot give valid consent to any procedure. (2) HINT expects all professionals who are asked for information about vaccination by adults and the parents of children, to be in possession of sufficient information to enable them to point those people in the direction of available and reliable information, so that adults and parents can make their own decisions.

Healthcare professionals who are asked for information about vaccination may find that adults and parents of children may need to read or research widely.

Information about vaccination in the public media is influenced by the nature of the vaccine industry and controlled by a few large corporations. Corporate law requires them to put shareholder benefit before all else. To maximise shareholder return, in a vaccine marketplace worth nearly \$50 Billion annually, those corporations employ huge advertising budgets. The public media depend on advertising income, and not surprisingly, feel obliged to reflect the views of their important advertisers. This seriously distorts the balance of information provided to readers and viewers.

Adults and the parents of children are strongly encouraged by the media and the NHS, to seek the advice of their doctors concerning vaccination. Many do so, and they may feel the need to look no further.

HINT is aware, as are other observers of the vaccination question, that some adults and parents wish to look further for information, as is their right. HINT considers that when healthcare professionals are sought out for information, those professionals must exercise their duty to listen carefully, and to give financially disinterested and up to date information, within the limits set by their knowledge. The perception of ambivalence and uncertainty in the NHS that some people experience is perhaps understandable.

GP practices receive an NHS financial bonus, which increases with the number of vaccinations performed. If this is not always made clear, a perceived lack of financial transparency becomes entangled with the legal necessity for the doctor to give comprehensive, disinterested information, prior to gaining valid informed consent.

The information provided in GP practices depends on the knowledge and experience of health professionals, against a background of NHS and Public Health support. The book, "Immunisation against infectious disease", commonly referred to as 'The Green Book', is intended as an everyday source of information in primary care. The current edition was published in 2013 and updated in 2014. Chapter 2, concerned with informed consent and professional liability, refers to the Bolam case. There is no mention of the Montgomery judgment. In this important respect, the advice is nearly five years out of date.

Because the current edition of the Green Book is out of date, it follows that information on other issues that are relevant to gaining informed consent, and which people ask about, is not included. For instance, the controversial role of aluminium adjuvants, (4) the recent disclosure that no valid safety studies of childhood vaccines have ever been done, (5,6) and the recent admission by the US Dept of Health and Human Services that for 30 years it had neglected to perform its statutory role of governance over the US vaccine industry - whence come many of our vaccines. (7,8) The UK MHRA is credited with collating follow up safety data on vaccines. No mention is made of the adverse vaccine reactions reported (57394), and reports with a fatal outcome (373) for the period 1.1.2000 - 31.12.2017. (9)

None of these important issues have been reported, in the public or medical print media, which adds to the concern of adults and parents who are alerted to them. If they find that their doctor does not have all such information available from NHS sources, it can be no surprise that they sometimes look elsewhere for information.

HINT believes it is the duty of all professionals with healthcare roles, to listen carefully, and to facilitate in a financially disinterested and informed manner, people's search for the information about vaccination that they seek, to enable them to make important decisions about their health, and the health of their children. HINT's approach is consistent with current UK law on informed consent.

1. [www.supremecourt.uk/cases/docs/uksc-2013-0136-judgment.pdf](http://www.supremecourt.uk/cases/docs/uksc-2013-0136-judgment.pdf)
2. Montgomery and informed consent: where are we now?  
*BMJ* 2017; 357 doi: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.j2224> (Published 12 May 2017)
3. <http://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/QB/2018/164.html>
4. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099\(04\)01039-4/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099(04)01039-4/fulltext)
5. <https://www.bmj.com/content/365/bmj.l4291/rr-3>
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9. MHRA. FOI 18/295, 29.6.2018 [www.gov.uk/mhra](http://www.gov.uk/mhra)