

This study was launched today with good WA media interest including Channel 9, Channel 10, The West Australian, and local radio stations.

NEW VACCINE PROMISES FEWER NEEDLES

Monday June 12, 2006

Perth researchers are calling for help from Perth toddlers and their parents to participate in a new project that aims to reduce the number of injections needed to protect children against meningitis.

The Vaccine Trials Group at the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research and Princess Margaret Hospital for Children is testing the effectiveness of a new vaccine combination.

Study leader Dr Peter Richmond said it's hoped that the vaccine combination would provide strong protection against *Haemophilus Influenzae* type b (Hib) meningitis and the Meningococcal C (Men C) strain of meningitis.

"Currently these vaccines are given separately to babies and provide excellent protection against what can be a deadly disease," Dr Richmond said,

"However, we do understand that many parents are concerned by the number of injections given to young children so, where possible, it would be great to be able to combine some of these vaccines."

Dr Richmond said the study would assess whether the combined vaccine is as effective as when they are given separately. It will also look at how long the protection lasts.

He said all vaccines would be given under medical supervision by staff who specialise in children's immunisations and the child's blood tested to ensure that they have immunity.

The combined HibMenC vaccine is already licensed and being used in the United Kingdom.

The Perth research project is part of an Australian wide study, sponsored by a major international pharmaceutical company.

100 healthy toddlers aged between 12 - 18 months who have not had their booster vaccinations are needed for the Perth study. To find out more, parents can contact the Vaccine Trials Group on 9340 8542.

Ends

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