Scientific Illiteracy Leads to Failure to Vaccinate Which Leads to Death

Curious Cat Science and Engineering Blog

Anti-vaccination propagandists help create the worst whooping cough epidemic in 70 years [1] by Steven Salzberg is a professor at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine:
When the vaccination rates drop, everyone becomes more vulnerable to infectious diseases. When more than 90% of the population is vaccinated, we have “herd immunity” – this means the disease can’t spread because there aren’t enough susceptible people in the community. So the high rate of vaccine refusal in Washington makes it easier for whooping cough (and other diseases) to spread.
…
And now we learn that the U.S. is in the midst of the worst whooping cough epidemic in 70 years. One of the most hard-hit states is Washington, which the CDC just announced (on 20 July) has suffered 2,520 cases so far this year, a 1300% increase over last year. This is the highest number of cases reported in Washington since 1942.
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The U.S. has had over 17,000 cases this year, putting it on track for the worst year since 1959. The highest rate of infection in the nation is in Wisconsin (which has also been hit hard by anti-vaccine effects), followed by Washington and Montana. 10 deaths have been reported, mostly in infants who were too young to be vaccinated. For all this, we can thank the anti-vaccination movement.

The failure of our society to appreciate the value of science has dire consequences. We are lucky to benefit from the results of scientific advances around us everyday. Some people, instead of appreciating the value of science waste these great gifts we have been given.

What people want to believe is up to them. When people’s actions risk others lives that is not ok. Drunk drivers risk others lives; therefore we don’t allow drunk driving. Society requires that people respect others right to live. It is sensible to require people to cooperate to limit damaging behavior: such as drunk driving or not being properly vaccinated.

Pertussis [2] (whooping cough) is a highly contagious bacterial disease that causes uncontrollable, violent coughing. The coughing can make it hard to breathe. Pertussis, or whooping cough, is an upper respiratory infection caused by the Bordetella pertussis or Bordetella parapertussis bacteria. It is a serious disease that can cause permanent disability in infants, and even death.

http://www.ecnmag.com/blogs/2012/07/scientific-illiteracy-leads-failure-vaccinate-which-leads-death?qt-recent_content=0

Links:
[1] http://genome.fieldofscience.com/2012/07/anti-vaccination-propagandists-help.html
[2] http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0002528/