

Jab makers linked to vaccine programme

VACCINATION for children is to be placed in the control of a group containing members with links to vaccine manufacturers.

Next month rules will come into force that will mean the Health Secretary, who has been in charge of vaccine policy, will be legally bound to accept the recommendations of the Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation.

Dr Richard Halvorsen, who runs a private GP surgery in London and who wrote the book *The Truth About Vaccines*, said: "The JCVI is unelected and many have ties with drug companies. That is a concern."

The JCVI is made up of about 20 volunteers from the medical profession.

Inquiries by the Sunday Express have revealed that at least two members received grants or travel fees from Wyeth and Merk, two vaccine manufacturers. Another carries out research funded by Sanofi Pasteur, while several have paid consultancy posts from pharmaceutical companies such as Merk,

By **Lucy Johnston** HEALTH EDITOR

GlaxoSmithKline, Roche and Novartis. Research also revealed that the JCVI covered up risks over the controversial measles, mumps and rubella jab.

According to a secret dossier, five cases of potentially deadly brain inflammation were reported following the use of MMR in Canada before it became part of standard childhood vaccinations in Britain.

Documents from the JCVI, gained through freedom of information requests, also reveal reports that another brand of MMR had caused "neurological complications" from the measles component of the vaccine in the US.

Despite this, the brands were administered routinely from 1988 without any warning of serious risk until they were withdrawn because of health fears four years later.

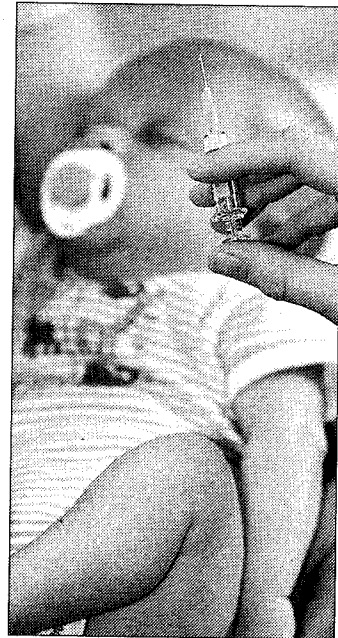
Jackie Fletcher, who runs Jabs, a support group for parents whose children have been affected by vaccines,

said: "The JCVI has a chequered history and we are concerned members have potential conflicts of interest because of their ties with vaccine manufacturers.

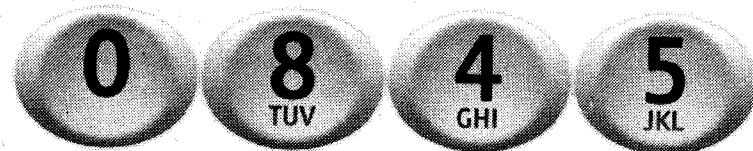
"What safeguards are in place to ensure undue pressure is not placed on JCVI members to introduce vaccines that support the jab makers' interests, rather than those of our children?" Ms Fletcher also fears the move may pave

the way for laws that would bar children from school if they are not vaccinated – an idea promoted by Labour MP Mary Creagh last year.

A spokesman for the Department of Health said: "The JCVI is an expert committee that advises the Secretary of State on which vaccines to introduce into the national programme. Members are bound by committee rules regarding declarations of interest."



NEEDLE: Parents are worried



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