TOPIC: Communication

**Fact**

Possible vaccine side effects are communicated transparently.

Side effects are recorded and reported so that safety information reaches both doctors and patients.

**Myth**

“The side effects of vaccinations are concealed.”

**Explanation of fallacy**

It is only right to want to make an informed vaccination decision. This naturally includes weighing the risks and benefits since any medication having an effect can also produce side effects. Some concern regarding severe vaccine side effects is understandable, particularly if there is an impression that they are not being adequately communicated. In fact, the benefits of vaccination take up more space in vaccination communication than the risks. The main reason for that being that the German Standing Committee on Vaccination (STIKO) only recommends vaccines, for which their benefits substantially outweigh their risks.

Severe side effects (those that go beyond what is usual for a vaccine reaction) are very rarely seen in routine medical practice. If they develop, they are reported and communicated transparently to specialists. The vaccinating doctor is obligated to report severe side effects. The Paul Ehrlich Institute, Germany’s federal institute for vaccines and biomedicines, evaluates these reports and then informs the medical profession. Additionally, information on known vaccine side effects is included in the summary of product characteristics, package leaflets and information sheets. In this way, reported side effects are considered in future educational talks so that patients can make an informed decision on vaccination.

**Fact**

In fact: All known side effects of vaccinations are communicated via different channels.

This was a truth sandwich.

More information at www.rki.de/vaccination-myths