



## THE AUSTRALIAN CAMPAIGN FOR ETHICAL AND EVIDENCE-BASED VACCINATION OF COMPANION ANIMALS

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In late 2010, Australian consumer watchdog, *CHOICE*, investigated pet vaccination, publishing the report: "[Pet vaccination – Over-vaccinating your pet could be harmful to their health as well as your own hip pocket](#)". The Australian media gave widespread coverage to the *CHOICE* report at the time. Despite this publicity, in 2012, over-vaccination of pets remains prevalent in Australia. [Annual 'booster' shots](#) against parvovirus for dogs continue to be blatantly promoted via the media<sup>2</sup>. Many dog owners are still not being advised that there is no scientific evidence to support annual OR triennial revaccination with core modified live virus (MLV) vaccines for parvovirus, distemper virus and adenovirus. It is misleading for veterinarians to demand that already immune pets have bogus 'booster' shots as the World Small Animal Veterinary Association's (WSAVA) Guidelines for the Vaccination of Dogs and Cats note that duration of immunity after core MLV vaccination is "many years and may be up to the lifetime of the pet".<sup>1</sup> (*Core MLV vaccines for dogs can be compared to the Measles/Mumps/Rubella (MMR) jab for children – adults are not revaccinated with the MMR jab every year or every three years as these vaccines are likely to provide lifetime immunity.*) Many pet owners remain unaware of the option to have titre-testing to verify their pet has responded to core MLV vaccination. Non-core vaccines of questionable benefit and safety for diseases such as *Bordetella bronchiseptica* (often referred to as 'kennel cough') continue to be prescribed indiscriminately.

Pet owners Bea Mies and Elizabeth Hart started to investigate over-vaccination of pets after their own dogs suffered and died after unnecessary vaccination. Bea's eight year old dog Champus died in 2003 from acute onset immune-mediated disease after years of unnecessary revaccinations. Elizabeth's eight year old dog Sasha became inexplicably ill with haemorrhagic gastroenteritis a week after unnecessary revaccination in 2008, and was subsequently put down. Both Bea and Elizabeth were shocked to discover that they had been misled by veterinarians, and that their dogs had needlessly been put at risk with unnecessary revaccinations every year. Elizabeth has a BA majoring in politics and philosophy, and is particularly interested in the ethical aspects of over-vaccination, see for example her essay: "[Over-vaccination of pets – an unethical practice](#)".

After an introduction by Pat Styles, another pet owner with a passion for exposing over-vaccination of pets, Elizabeth joined forces with Bea to demand the veterinary profession properly inform pet owners about vaccination best practice, including the WSAVA Vaccination Guidelines Group's (VGG) advice "to reduce the 'vaccine load' on individual animals in order to minimize the potential for adverse reactions to vaccine products".<sup>1</sup> The WSAVA VGG also acknowledges that "there is gross under-reporting of vaccine-associated adverse events which impedes knowledge of the ongoing safety of these products".<sup>1</sup> (To report an adverse experience after vaccination contact the [Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority](#) [APVMA].)

Bea and Elizabeth have spent many years undertaking extensive correspondence with international government regulators, veterinary associations, veterinary academics and vaccine company representatives regarding over-vaccination of pets. (See for example their ongoing correspondence with the [UK Veterinary Medicines Directorate](#).) [Bea's recent submission](#) to the WSAVA VGG criticizes ambiguous and contradictory information in the WSAVA Owner/Breeder Vaccination Guidelines, the WSAVA Guidelines for Vaccination of Dogs and Cats (published in the *Journal of Small Animal Practice*)<sup>1</sup>, and other material published in the scientific literature (6 February 2012). Bea awaits a response from the WSAVA VGG to the issues she has raised.

Elizabeth's [submission to the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons](#) (RCVS) on professional conduct and companion animal vaccination practice (24 June 2011) also contains a list of weblinks to much of the other material she has produced on unnecessary vaccination of pets, including her [open letter](#) of complaint about the continuing calls for already immune animals to be needlessly, and possibly harmfully, revaccinated. This open letter was addressed to the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA), Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC) and the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) (26 March 2011). The AVA, AVBC and RCVS have failed to respond to the matters raised in Elizabeth's correspondence. These veterinarian-focused associations refuse to be accountable to the public. Similarly, the APVMA, and Federal Government Ministers such as Senator Joe Ludwig of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; and David Bradbury, Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer with responsibility for Consumer Affairs continue to shirk responsibility, and sit back and allow pet owners and their pets to be exploited by over-vaccinating veterinarians and vaccine companies.

Bea and Elizabeth are continuing their campaign for ethical and evidence-based vaccination of companion animals. For more information contact: Elizabeth Hart: [eliz.hart25@gmail.com](mailto:eliz.hart25@gmail.com) Bea Mies: [beatemies@gmail.com](mailto:beatemies@gmail.com)

1. Day, M.J., Horzinek, M.C., Schultz, R.D. World Small Animal Veterinary Association's (WSAVA) **Guidelines for the Vaccination Guidelines of Dogs and Cats**. *Journal of Small Animal Practice*. Vol. 51. June 2010: <http://www.wsava.org/PDF/Misc/VaccinationGuidelines2010.pdf>

2. For example: "Puppies should begin a series of vaccinations against parvo at six weeks and receive booster shots at yearly intervals."

**Parvo still a big problem**. *The North West Star*. 30 December 2011: <http://www.northweststar.com.au/news/local/news/general/parvo-still-a-big-problem/2406465.aspx>