

Doctors Admit MMR Vaccine Doubts

Nearly half of all family doctors have reservations about giving children their second dose of the controversial MMR vaccine, according to researchers.

Almost one in five GPs have not read official advice about the combined measles, mumps and rubella jab and 46 per cent said they wanted more information and training.

A third of practice nurses said they thought the jab was "very likely or possibly" associated with Crohn's disease and 27 per cent thought it was linked to autism.

The study in the *British Medical Journal* follows a warning from Government experts that the country is at risk of a potentially fatal outbreak of measles because immunization levels have dropped dramatically.

Children are given a first dose of the MMR jab at 12 to 15 months and a second, booster dose at between three and five years old.

Researchers questioned 140 health visitors, 204 practice nurses and 165 GPs in North Wales about their attitudes towards the vaccine.

Four out of ten GPs, 49 per cent of health visitors and 54 per cent of practice nurses (48 per cent overall) had reservations about the jab.

They found that 17 per cent of GPs said they had not read the information on measles, mumps and rubella contained in the doctors' bible *Immunisation Against Infectious Diseases*.

Nearly half (46 per cent) said they would have liked more information and training on the MMR vaccine.

And only 46 per cent felt confident about explaining the need for the second dose to parents.