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Vaccines, part 2: Are Vaccines Reliable and Safe?

(If you missed the predecessor of this article, you can get it [here](#).)

Vaccines are generally promoted as "safe prevention of disease". It is smart marketing. Although there do exist examples that indicate this could be right in some cases, there are also many examples known to demonstrate the exact opposite.

It still remains a scientific fact that proof of efficacy of vaccines simply does not exist....

Are vaccines actually providing good protection?

The answer here is: "Maybe". And this is where things get tricky, because it depends on a bunch of factors that should be known to the veterinarian - and most certainly also to the dog owner who orders the vaccination done...

You need to understand that there is no scientific proof to back up a belief that vaccines actually work.... Such proof would take a terrible experiment with a large number of dogs of all kinds divided into two groups, one vaccinated and one not - and then have them all exposed to the dangerous disease. The total number of dogs involved would have to be very large, because there are a ton of other factors that will influence the results, such as the diet, the dog's age, the dog's exercise condition, the mental balance, the overall care etc.

There is just no way of getting any meaningful results from a "controlled laboratory experiment", because those lab conditions are not representative for "real life" at all. The closest we get is a Finnish study from 1997 of about 400 ferrets, half of which were vaccinated with distemper vaccine, then exposed to live distemper virus. All 200 non-vaccinated ferrets died. All the vaccinated ferrets survived. But just the fact that the death toll amongst the unvaccinated ferrets was 100% indicates that we cannot conclude much about *dogs* from this...

However, there are many anecdotal examples of vaccines that have proven very effective, at a fairly low risk, when administered alone. Canine Distemper vaccine is

the classic example of such a reasonably effective vaccine that generally triggers a very strong and lasting immune response *in healthy dogs* - with only minor side effects and risks when it does not get repeated.

The best example is from the Swiss Distemper epidemic in 1984. About 400 dogs died from Distemper back then, and only 4% those (16 dogs) were vaccinated with a Distemper-only vaccine, some of them several times. The balance of 96% was fairly evenly divided between dogs that either had not been vaccinated at all, or had been vaccinated with combined vaccines! Back then, combined vaccines were fairly new on the market, and it would be fair to estimate that less than 10% of all vaccinated dogs in Switzerland had been vaccinated with them. The one that was emerging in the market place there was the Distemper-Parvo vaccine... From personal contacts, my estimate would be that about 1/5 of all Swiss dogs were not vaccinated all. With 4/5 (=80%) of all dogs contributing only 4% to the death stats, we have reasonable proof of a serious protection through the vaccine (from these numbers, a 20-fold reduction of the risk). However, with 1/5 (= 20%) unvaccinated dogs contributing about the same as the 10% that received "combo-shots", we have an unpleasant conclusion to make: the dogs were much better off *not* being vaccinated than being vaccinated with a "combo-shot"!

For Rabies, we simply do not know the efficacy of the vaccine. There are no reliable stats available, except for this: when Rabies vaccination was introduced for people in France as a result of Louis Pasteur's recommendations, the mortality increased from about 30 cases per year to 45 cases per year. When vaccination was stopped again, the cases dropped below 10 per year...

Are vaccines safe?

The short answer is obviously: "NO".

The very principle behind the way they work involves serious risk. A vaccine is a challenge to the immune system. If the immune system is strong enough to handle that challenge, it *might* get stronger by the exposure. But we do not have any simple measures for judging a body's immune system up front, so we can never be totally sure that the body is fully capable of producing the desired response. We cannot even be totally sure that the vaccination will not cause *serious problems*, including the disease it was supposed to protect against! There are *many* examples in the scientific literature that confirm this. So, there is a gamble involved in using vaccines.

The vaccine manufacturers clearly state on their labels that vaccines are only to be used on *healthy* animals, and never on animals that are traumatized, stressed, infected with disease or suffering from any immune system disorder (like an allergy) or any neurologic disorders (like epilepsy, seizures, cramps, etc.)...

Does your vet check for all that before he/she injects the vaccine into your dog?

The Merck Manual (the "bible" on drugs and medicine, published by the world's biggest vaccine manufacturer, Merck) says, "Children with B and/or T cell immunodeficiencies should not receive live virus vaccines as the vaccine can stimulate a severe or *fatal* infection".

Merck further explains, "Features of B and T cell immunodeficiencies include eczema, dermatitis, heart disease, inhalant allergies, food allergies, and neurological conditions". They say that humans suffering with any of these conditions, *or from families with these conditions*, should not receive live virus vaccines because the vaccine can kill them.

There is no difference between people and dogs in this regard. Dogs have B and T cells, and B and T cell immunodeficiencies - just as many humans have. So if your dog has allergies, or heart problems, or any kind of neurological problems, then you could very well be killing your dog by letting a vet give it a vaccination...

The real problem about vaccine safety is that it is very difficult to prove. There are too many variables and too many other possible reasons for the problems that are observed. However, from Catherine O'Driscoll's "Canine Health Consensus" there is no way of "explaining away" the fact that vaccinations lead to more vet visits! In accordance with this statistically massive study, some 70-75% of all vet visits take place within 3 months from a vaccination. If vaccines were not part of the problem, it should only have been 25% - or even less!

Suffice it here to state that there is no proof available that vaccines are indeed safe. Neither is there any proof available that they always are effective, even if administered correctly; the Swiss Distemper epidemic is not really "proof", although it contains the material for some very important conclusions when we add some additional knowledge from other sources.

Side effects or other problems

On top of this: many common vaccines are notorious troublemakers.... Leptospirosis is one. The disease is caused by a bunch of different bacteria that mutate as fast as the human flu. There is no way of manufacturing an effective vaccine against that. Besides, this disease is extremely rare, and it is easy to treat with antibiotics and treatment is usually successful if started early enough.

Lyme disease is caused by certain ticks that carry the bacteria that cause the disease. It is a bacteria that is easy to destroy with antibiotics - and treatment of the disease is less dangerous than vaccination...

Corona virus, Parvo, Bordatella, and the other "kennel coughs" are all non-fatal diseases any healthy dog will fight back in a matter of days. The side effects of the vaccines take *years*.... Besides, Corona virus is a case of fraud, nothing less: there has never been a case reported in North America until *after* this disease was

included in the "combo-shots"! Besides, over a period of about 10 years, I have seen some 150 cases of Parvo develop about 2-4 weeks after the dogs got their vaccination... All of them fairly mild, but *Parvo* nevertheless!

What vaccines are relevant to consider?

So, what is left? Not much! You might be able to find some additional exotic diseases that might hit a handful of dogs on a Continent - but, seriously, those should not even enter your risk management considerations.

Because of the serious side effect and risks associated with *any* vaccine, it is simply not prudent to vaccinate against diseases that are not life threatening.

It is also *not responsible* to even consider using multiple vaccines, no matter what your vet wants to promote.

The main conclusion you can draw safely is that there really are only two diseases that you should even consider vaccinating against: Rabies and Distemper. And even those should only be considered if you live in an area where they constitute a serious risk – which is very far from “everywhere”!

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