

HEALTH AND MEDICINE

Fearing Pandemic, Harvard requires COOTIES vaccine for enrollment

Cambridge, MA - As of May 2007, Harvard Students have been advised to brace for "perhaps the most dangerous pandemic in recorded history". Added Barry Bloom, Dean of the Harvard School of Public Health, "This is no laughing matter, students. People tend to think that COOTIES is something that only children have to worry about, but the reality is that it's quite a killer. In fact, 36,000 Harvard students come down with COOTIES each year and some of them even die!", according to mathematical models extrapolated from a historical review of Harvard College enrollment data. After reviewing these findings, the National Institutes of Health, the Harvard Medical School, and the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) all recommended that college students nationwide now be required to take the much heralded experimental COOTIES vaccine before they are allowed to enroll in Fall 2007 courses.



major risk factors. Harvard and Mass General Hospital researcher Axel Smith-Klein explained, "The disease seems to be transmitted not just through the air and by direct physical contact, but simply by a primal psychosomatic reaction to members of the opposite sex. And for reasons not yet known to science, certain people — for example those who are extremely hot — seem to possess a natural immunity. Needless to say, Harvard campus contains all the makings of a major pandemic of Bird-Fluian proportions."

By contrast, Harvard Sophomore Mandy Anderson raised a note of skepticism, "Let's take Bird Flu. So a guy died last week Shandong, China. From what I'm told, researchers suspect a pandemic. Now I'm not insensitive to the tragedy, but if that's a pandemic, then I guess the guy who got killed by a flying toaster was the harbinger of a new appliance related pandemic. Evidently, they've redefined things to include a pandemic of one." Anderson paused to take a bite of her sandwich. "And its even weirder with COOTIES. I'm pretty convinced its not even a real disease."

In the past, vaccinations for diseases such as measles, rubella, and hepatitis B have been optional, but in recent years, the university has asserted itself in an effort to "take public health seriously", according to Bloom.

Smith-Klein responded, "I'm afraid students today don't have a realistic grasp of how devastating a COV-578 pandemic could be. Just today, I treated a student from Dudley House for a stage four COOTIES infection and, uh, some pretty extreme hygiene issues. Ms. Anderson shouldn't dismiss the reality of the pathogen just because of her own relative hotness. I doubt that she would stand by her remarks when faced with speaking to the victim's family."

The recent media attention on the COOTIES virus, the Complex Organic Olfactory Total Internal Ecccchhhh Syndrome (also know as COV-578), has sparked a flurry of medical research, much of it conducted here at Harvard. The work has resulted in a promising trial version of the COOTIES vaccine, COOVAX™ which consists of a base shot and 12 booster shots (which must be taken while sitting in a booster seat) administered bimonthly for 24 months, along with a complicated cocktail involving 2 circles and 2 dots. The cost is only \$129.95 per shot, "a bargain when your life is on the line", according to HUHS spokesperson Maureen Astra-Zeneca. Following a recent internal Harvard report, the school plans to conduct phase III vaccine clinical trials for COOVAX™ locally. Bloom noted, "We first considered advertising on the T like we usually do for these things, but after thinking it over in our weekly closed door session, I just said fuck it, let's start at Cabot house!"



Harvard Researchers Identify Deadliest COOTIES Strains of 2007 (electron microscopy, magnification x 4 million - Credit: Smith Klein)

Anderson replied, "You can't just make a pandemic real just by saying there's going to be one. Truthfully, I'd be more worried about getting pterodactyl or archaeopteryx flu. And I sure as hell won't let them test an experimental vaccine on me, and have the gall to put it on my term bill, for a disease that's about as real as Santa Claus." HSP later learned that Anderson had been expelled for not taking the vaccine, which was not yet available.

Harvard President Drew Faust assured students that she will be personally overseeing Harvard's COOTIES preparedness plan. "Having suffered from a particularly debilitating strain of the disease throughout much of elementary and high school, I understand what's at stake here. I know that limiting enrollment to the vaccinated seems harsh, but with the help of all our students, we can set our campus on a course where it will be almost as if the pandemic never had a chance."

In preparation for the upcoming pandemic, researchers have begun charting how the disease spreads and quantifying its

