

# Introduction

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- Pediatrician trained in pediatric infectious diseases
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- “The pediatrician’s perspective on preliminary findings as evidence for decision making”

- Pediatricians depend upon national policy makers for guidance regarding public health issues, including (and perhaps, especially) immunizations.

- Immunizations contributed more to the health of children than perhaps any other public health measure during the past century—and much more is possible.

- Health policy recommendations, including immunizations affect almost every child.
- At the time a recommendation is made, it is extremely important that as much information as possible is available regarding both safety and effectiveness.
- Messages that confuse the public about either safety or effectiveness compromise
  - The credibility of the public health system
  - The credibility of the individual health care provider who recommends or carries out the recommendation

- In considering data collected to determine health policy it is essential that discussions are held with individuals and organizations who would logically be able to contribute to the analysis of data in order to review summaries of findings prior to development of policy.

- It is equally important
  - That actual analysis be done by individuals who are knowledgeable about the limitations of the databases
  - That the analysis protect
    - The confidentiality of patients who make up the data
    - The intellectual property of those who collected the data

- Publication and dissemination of preliminary findings that have a bearing on eventual health policy has the potential to undermine final policy decisions.
- Use of preliminary data, once final data analysis is complete, may be used to confirm preformed opinions, even if those opinions are contradicted by final analysis.

- Decisions regarding data sharing, at least in situations in which the data will be used to develop health policy, must take into consideration the impact that misleading or inappropriate conclusions might have on the health of children and on public trust.