

31 August 2009

Dear Sir Liam,

Thank you for your letter of 10th August in response to Invest in ME's email to you concerning H1N1 and Myalgic Encephalomyelitis.

In your letter to Invest in ME you stated -

that ME " is not a condition which leads to the inclusion of sufferers in the population groups offered vaccination for seasonal influenza".

Yet on your own web page (<http://tinyurl.com/mke5qk>) you describe the "population groups" offered vaccination and state

"that any vaccine for H1N1 would be given to "household contacts of immunocompromised individuals" "

There is an obvious and dangerous inconsistency here.

Invest in ME have a great deal of research indicating that patients are "immunocompromised" - much of it highlighted by the leading experts on ME at our annual conferences. The role of enteroviruses and herpes viruses in this illness has had much peer-reviewed research of which the CMO ought to be aware. These viruses compromise the immune system.

Could we ask how you can maintain a position that ME does not fit into a group consisting of those who are immunosuppressed?

We are also aware that the Department of Health officially classes CFS/ME as "a chronic neurological condition". The NHS website includes chronic neurological diseases among high risk groups needing preferential treatment - see the influenza immunisation programme 2009/10 in Annex 5 under Clinical Risk groups is included Chronic Neurological disease -
[http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/documents/digital_asset/dh_097535.pdf]

That also qualifies ME as one of the high risk groups.

We would ask that you reconsider your statements and provide clarification for our supporters and all people with ME in the UK as to whether ME patients are in the population groups offered vaccination.

Whether the H1N1 vaccine is at all trustworthy for ME patients is another matter but we find it of great concern that you deem ME not to be an illness which has implications for the immune system of patients,

Yours Sincerely,

Invest in ME

Charity Nr. 1114035

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