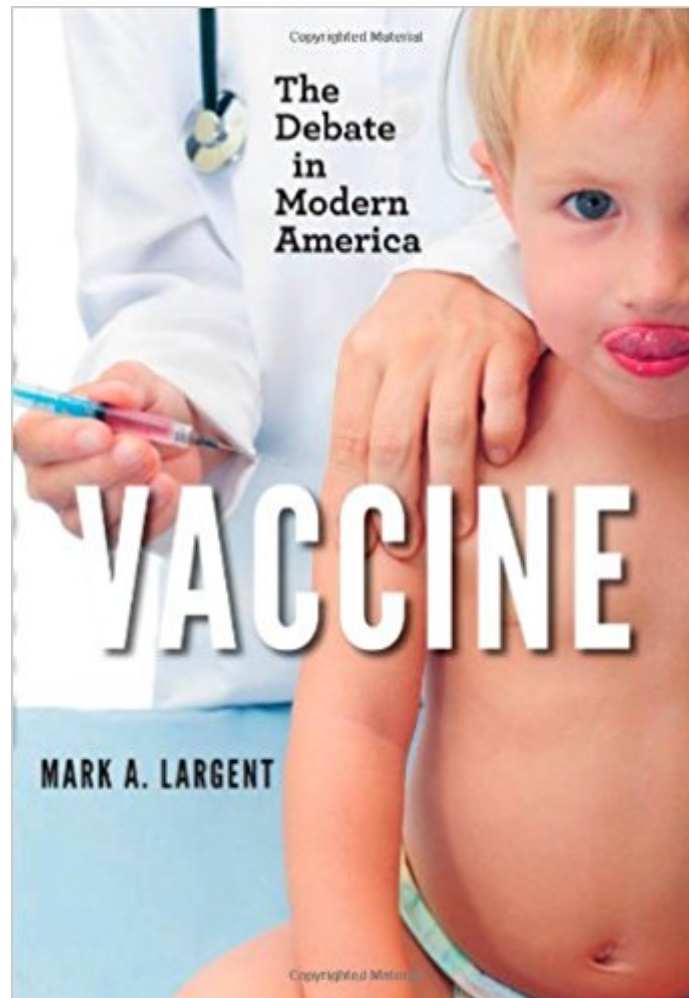




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Vaccine: The Debate In Modern America



Synopsis

Since 1990, the number of mandated vaccines has increased dramatically. Today, a fully vaccinated child will have received nearly three dozen vaccinations between birth and age six. Along with the increase in number has come a growing wave of concern among parents about the unintended side effects of vaccines. In *Vaccine*, Mark A. Largent explains the history of the debate and identifies issues that parents, pediatricians, politicians, and public health officials must address. Nearly 40% of American parents report that they delay or refuse a recommended vaccine for their children. Despite assurances from every mainstream scientific and medical institution, parents continue to be haunted by the question of whether vaccines cause autism. In response, health officials herald vaccines as both safe and vital to the public's health and put programs and regulations in place to encourage parents to follow the recommended vaccine schedule. For Largent, the vaccine-autism debate obscures a constellation of concerns held by many parents, including anxiety about the number of vaccines required (including some for diseases that children are unlikely ever to encounter), unhappiness about the rigorous schedule of vaccines during well-baby visits, and fear of potential side effects, some of them serious and even life-threatening. This book disentangles competing claims, opens the controversy for critical reflection, and provides recommendations for moving forward.

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Customer Reviews

"Mark Largent brings a moving personal story, acute cultural observation, and deep historical

scholarship to the festering and dangerous vaccine debate. His is a fresh new voice from which we can all learn much." (Jonathan D. Moreno, Ph.D., Center for Bioethics, University of Pennsylvania, and author of *The Body Politic: The Battle over Science in America*) "Any health collection catering to parents, health professional or the general public needs this fine survey of the history and contentions of the vaccine debate." (Midwest Book Review) "This is an important book in the context of the current vaccine wars. Every pediatrician and pediatric specialist should not only read this book but also take to heart its message." (Roger A. Brumback *Journal of Child Neurology*) "This book provides a fantastic overview of both sides of the vaccine debate... This knowledge and understanding could improve [physician's] success in alleviating concerns for parents with anxiety toward vaccination of their children." (Sarah S. Nyp *Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics*) "Largent's fluid prose makes this 222-page book an easy read. It will interest vaccine proponents and detractors alike, along with parents and policymakers who have questions about the long list of mandated vaccines, and health professionals who must explain benefits and risks to anxious parents." (Life Sciences) "In an era of polarized debate over vaccines... Vaccine can potentially lead us toward a promised land of dialogue and substantially greater mutual understanding." (Robert D. Johnston *Isis*) "An important overview of scientific research on the safety and side effects of vaccination. Largent also incorporates his own decisions about his daughter's vaccinations as an example of how one parent has navigated the competing claims about vaccines... Parents need to educate themselves and make well-informed decisions about their children's vaccinations." (Andrea Rusnock *Nature Medicine*) "Largent's reasoned, evidence based exploration is a worthy and important contribution to a public debate too often built upon flimsy claims and perpetuated by hyperbole." (Sarah Glassford *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History*)

Mark A. Largent is an associate professor and director of the Science, Technology, Environment, and Public Policy program at Michigan State University.

In *Vaccine: The Debate in Modern America*, Largent couples historical scholarship, keen cultural observations, and personal experiences in order to explore the American debate surrounding vaccination. Largent's engaging, provocative and compelling argument suggests that the debate about the science, safety and efficacy of vaccination is a proxy for a set of unaddressed underlying anxieties regarding vaccines; therefore, science is not enough to resolve it. The book sets out to explore these anxieties and understand where and how they originated. Largent's insightful

observations provide ways in which the debate can be moved forward by addressing the anxieties parents have directly. Largent argues that by ignoring the underlying anxieties public health officials and vaccine advocates have misconstrued the reasons parents chose not to vaccinate or delay vaccination. Secondly, public health officials prefer to discuss the efficacy, and safety of vaccines because this is within their professional realm. Vaccine advocates often claim that ignorance is one of the reasons parents are anxious about vaccinating their children. They claim that this refusal to vaccinate is predicated by an ignorance of the severity of the diseases for which vaccines protect. Whereas, data demonstrates that the more educated parents are the more likely they are to have reservations about the recommended vaccine schedule. One of the most important observations made by Largent is that not all vaccines are the same thus recognizing that not all vaccines are equal could sooth the rhetoric of the debate and allow for a more fruitful discussion. Otherwise, parents who are anxious about the amount of vaccines or one specific vaccine may be pushed not to vaccinate at all. Failing to recognize the differences between different inoculations results in an all or nothing approach. Largent recognizes and emphasizes (throughout the book) that there is no evidence linking vaccines to autism or other ailments. The book also deals extensively and in a sympathetic manner with both Wakefield (who alleged that the MMR vaccine was link to autism) and Jenny McCarthy (who claims vaccines can cause autism). This sympathy is an important tool that historians need to employ in order to adequately portray the view of the historical actors they are writing about. This book will be of interest to those interested in skepticism, science and its relation to public policy, public health, the vaccine debates, and the ever increasing complex relationship between science and society. Arguably it also provides a useful way to think and address contemporary debates regarding science and the public (the teaching of evolution; global climate change, etc). [Note: I have used parts of this text elsewhere]. For a more in depth analysis of the book, you can go to [...]

It's an important book for anyone perplexed by the autism-vaccine debate. The author has written an engaging narrative that is quite informative and balanced. Its contents are unlike other books on the topic.

it the kindle version, not very user friendly for my taste.

Vaccine: The Debate in MOnern America was received promptly and accurately. The book was well discribed in the advertisement and in the literature.

Having the debate in a balanced way. Much more objective than other book on this topic. covers very good information.

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