

### WHO/Bulletin

February 2009

**GENEVA** – A recent measles outbreak in Germany has highlighted the need for vaccination reminders and better information for parents, according to research published today in the international public health journal, the *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*.

A study of the outbreak in the German city of Duisburg found that at least 80% of 614 measles cases in 2006 were reported as “unvaccinated”. The main reasons given were that parents either forgot to take their children to be vaccinated or rejected the vaccine, for various reasons including the mistaken belief that it was dangerous.

Even in countries with good health services, measles can be very serious, particularly in young children, according to Dr Peter Strebel from the Department of Immunization, Vaccines and Biologicals at the World Health Organization. “Measles still causes an estimated 197 000 deaths each year around the world, the majority of them children under the age of five. Parents and doctors need to be reminded that measles is a highly contagious disease. Even healthy and well-nourished children, if unvaccinated, are at risk of measles and its complications such as pneumonia, encephalitis and, although rare, death.”

As a result of the outbreak in Germany, two children died of encephalitis and 95 were hospitalized.

Read the study here: <http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/87/2/07-050187.pdf>

The *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* is an international journal of public health with a special focus on developing countries. It is one of the world’s leading public health journals and the flagship periodical of the World Health Organization.

This issue covers a spectrum of topics including:

Spotlight on cholera: a recent outbreak in Zimbabwe highlights failures worldwide. Also we interview two men who changed the way the world treats diarrhoeal diseases

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Why do babies with good access to health care in Pakistan die?

-

How the Thai government consulted the public to help shape future public health policies

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Why do health workers in the United Republic of Tanzania fail to follow guidelines for severely ill children

-

Link between poverty and parasitic skin diseases

-

Cutting-edge health information system is rolled out in Belize

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Innovative mechanism to fund medicines in the Sudan

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Best methods for trachoma surveys

The Bulletin's table of contents can be found at: <http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/87/2/en/index.html>

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## Immunization Could Have Prevented Fatal Measles Outbreak in Germany

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