

HOBSON'S choice:

to IMMUNISE or NOT

It may be highly politically-incorrect in the medical bureaucracy, but some researchers are beginning to think the drop in our cot death rate may be linked to a drop in the number of babies being immunised. As the Government examines making immunisation compulsory, there's growing evidence vaccinations are killing New Zealand infants. **Bernard Moran** examines both sides of a raging debate that few parents are aware of: are cot deaths caused by vaccines?

Natasha Garnet of Tauranga was feeding her five-month old son Ethan in April last year. It was a Sunday morning and she was very worried. Ethan had received his first vaccination at six weeks and immediately fell into a deep sleep at the doctor's clinic. The medical staff assured Natasha that there was no problem, he was fine.

But the next day, Ethan had a sickly pallor, he was both vomiting and passing a clear watery liquid and appeared very sleepy. There were prominent bruises around the vaccination site.

It is usual practice for medical staff to hand the mother a flyer explaining that there could be side effects, but in

Natasha's case, the nurse handed it to her after the vaccination.

Ethan was due for another vaccination at three months. His mother was in a quandary about repeating the experience, but reminder letters from the medical practice kept arriving every week. When he was five months old, Natasha took him for his three-month vaccination on a Thursday.

Within hours Ethan was vomiting and passing the watery liquid. He was sleepy, yet disturbed and wanted his mother close by. The condition suddenly worsened on Sunday morning, Ethan was soaked as the liquid poured out of him. Natasha applied CPR in vain.

"The autopsy report stated that Ethan had died of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome)" recalls Natasha. "The doctor who had immunised him seemed to avoid meeting me face-to-face. She would telephone and cancel appointments. Later she rang me and as we spoke, I could hear her typing the conversation on to her computer. Her manner was very defensive. Later I arranged for another doctor to examine the autopsy report and he advised me that there was a direct link with the vaccinations."

Hilary Butler of the Immunisation Awareness Society has heard of many such tragic tales. She has prepared a 34-page position paper to be delivered at the

