

Observational study to estimate the changes in the effectiveness of bacillus Calmette–Guérin (BCG) vaccination with time since vaccination for preventing tuberculosis in the UK

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Plain English summary

BCG effectiveness for TB prevention in UK

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Plain English summary

It was believed that the protection given by the bacillus Calmette–Guérin (BCG) vaccination against tuberculosis lasted for only 10 years. This was used to define policy in the UK. Recently, some studies have suggested that this protection could last longer. We studied how the protection changes with time since vaccination in two situations: when BCG vaccination was given to infants at higher risk of tuberculosis (the current policy) and when it was given at school age (UK policy until 2005). We found that protection from infant BCG vaccination lasted for 10 years, but robust data could not be obtained to establish vaccination status in some subjects. For vaccine given at school age, we found that protection was substantial for at least 20 years after vaccination (vaccine effectiveness 51% from 10 to 15 years after vaccination and 57% from 15 to 20 years after vaccination).

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