Doctors discuss use of MenB vaccine at Princeton University

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The planned use of an experimental *Neisseria meningitides* serogroup B meningitis vaccine at the University of Princeton has raised several contentious issues relating to vaccination, according to an ideas and opinions piece published online Dec. 24 in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

(HealthDay)—The planned use of an experimental *Neisseria meningitides* serogroup B (MenB) meningitis vaccine at the University of Princeton has raised several contentious issues relating to vaccination, according to an ideas and opinions piece published online Dec. 24 in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

Kristen A. Feemster, M.D., M.P.H., and Paul Offit, M.D., from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine in Philadelphia, discuss use of the unlicensed vaccine (Bexsero) at the University of Princeton, where eight confirmed cases of MenB have been identified.

The authors note that despite a coordinated response from the

University, N.J. Department of Health, and U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the outbreak persisted. Although concern has been expressed relating to "emergency use" of an experimental vaccine, safety has been established in clinical trials and the vaccine is licensed in the European Union and Australia. Vaccine receipt is voluntary, but will be offered to university students and high-risk university-affiliated individuals. Use of the vaccine in this situation has called into question the decision not to distribute the vaccine in the United States. Vaccine manufacturers are currently prioritizing development of a 5-valent vaccine including MenB, and until such time, broader access to Bexsero is considered unlikely.

"While many have also called for wider access to a MenB vaccine, others view Princeton students as test subjects—we want what we cannot have yet also distrust what is unknown," the authors write.

One author disclosed financial ties to Pfizer and Abbott.

More information: Full Text (subscription or payment may be required)

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