

# HPV vaccine 'damaging girls' lives' says Mullingar family

**RESEARCH** HSE should 'halt use until more tests are carried out'

**RODNEY FARRY**

MULLINGAR parents who claim that their teenage daughter has suffered life changing health problems since she received the vaccine against cervical cancer have spoken out to warn other families.

Paddy and Caroline Delaney say that their now 17-year-old daughter Shannon, a Leaving Certificate student in Mullingar Community College, was a healthy and fit youngster until she received the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, Gardasil, three years ago.

According to the HSE, the vaccine, which has had an uptake of 84% since its introduction in 2010, is recommended by the World Health Organisation.

However, the Delaneys claim

that Shannon's health started to rapidly decline shortly after she received her third and final dose in April 2012.

"One morning we called her for school but when she tried to get out of bed she saw double and she fainted three times that morning," her father, Paddy says.

"We went to A&E and they were very thorough and couldn't find anything. They weren't happy and admitted her. She underwent numerous tests, and every one came back clear but the fact that she had low blood pressure."

That visit was the first of many as Shannon's health deteriorated and she began to suffer from a range of conditions, including dizziness, blurred vision, chronic pain and fatigue and panic attacks, problems which her family say

have only got worse.

"She was very sporty. She played for Loman's, was in Mullingar Harriers, she swam, played tennis, practised taekwondo and any other sports activity that went on the school. She got the highest score in the beep fitness test in her first year and now she can't even do 30 minutes of PE because of it.

"We can't go anywhere. We can't go out for a night. We can't go to a friend's house. She is with us constantly. She is 17. She should be having a life. She has lost a circle of friends.

"She didn't know what was wrong with her so she couldn't explain why she couldn't go for a sleepover or why she couldn't go out. She was exhausted."

After two years of fruitless hospital and doctor visits, the Delaneys were no closer to finding out why their once healthy daughter's life had been turned upside down.

Shannon had been diagnosed fatigue and low blood pressure, but given her deterioration, her concerned parents felt there was more to it.

They were vindicated last year when Caroline came upon a website - Regret.ie - for the families of girls suffering from the health problems related to the HPV vaccine.

The Delaneys discovered that Shannon's health problems were similar to hundreds of her contemporaries across Ireland.

"I never put two and two together but I did say when she was admitted to hospital that she had the HPV vaccine. I was told that's okay.

"We are not against immunisation, we have four kids and they all had their vaccines from the day they were born. This isn't about anti-immunisation, this is about this HPV jab, which needs to be stopped.

"We have a 100 girls on our



Shannon Delaney with her parents, Caroline and Paddy, at their Ardleigh home.

website, all the same," Caroline says.

"When you get a letter from the HSE saying that if your daughter gets this vaccination she won't get cervical cancer, you're like 'right that's great'. But you aren't told what the risks are.

"You're told basic stuff about redness in the arms, a headache and nausea. Shannon can't over go on a sleepover now because of her terrible nightmares."

Shannon says that the discovery of the website was a huge relief.

"I was happy when I heard about the other girls with the

same symptoms because I went through a year of actually thinking I was making it up. I made myself think that I was making myself sick because I wasn't getting answers."

Currently studying for her Leaving Certificate, Shannon has ambitions to go to college to study nursing but at the minute spends almost as much time out of school as in.

"If I'm looking at my copy and then I look at the board my vision goes. I can't make out what it is, I have to get a friend or teacher to take down the notes.

"I want to make myself get to school and make myself get to

college. I'm not going to have any doctors tell me I won't be able to make it to college.

"I'm quite stubborn. I don't want to let it get in the way of my life but I don't know if I'll be able to."

Shannon and her parents say that they decided to speak out to try and raise awareness of what they believe are the potentially life changing side effects from the HPV vaccine.

"We reckon there are more girls out there whose parents haven't made the connection.

"We wish the HSE would just stop the vaccine until there's more research, they're damaging girls' lives."

## The HSE's response

The HSE is guided by the Health Products Regulatory Authority and the recommendations made by the National Immunisation Advisory Committee.

Gardasil is considered safe and well tolerated. The most frequently reported side effects are local redness and /or swelling at the point of injection, and fever.

These are typical and usually mild and temporary reactions to any kind of vaccination.

Fainting has occurred after vaccination with Gardasil, especially in adolescents. Fainting has also been reported with other vaccines in adolescence.

It is not known whether this is due to the vaccines or if the increased incidence in this age group merely reflects that adolescents are generally more likely to experience fainting after an injection. The onset of fainting is usually immediate.

A review of fainting after vaccination found that 89% occurred within 15 minutes of vaccination and that the adolescents recovered quickly.

There is no evidence of long-term sequelae to Gardasil. In some countries there have been deaths reported following HPV vaccination; however, further investigation has shown that none of these deaths were causally associated with the HPV vaccine and were due to other unrelated causes such as drowning, malaria and an undiagnosed tumour.

## Car parking and gambling discussed at council

### Car parking

"I'm not happy with the reply here! Now honest to God!" exclaimed an angry Cllr Paddy Hill.

Speaking at the monthly meeting of Mullingar Municipal District, he asked that the council level the area opposite

St Mary's Cemetery, Collinstown, to allow cars park at funerals and other ceremonies.

The Fianna Fáil county councillor was annoyed when told this was not a council cemetery.

"I know it's not a council cemetery, but the council has

a role in cleaning the far side of the road."

He pleaded that if a small bit of work were done it would be much appreciated.

Furthermore, Cllr Hill urged the council to have another look at the situation and report back to him.

### Gambling

Smokey bookies are a thing of the past - you can now lose your week's wages sitting on your couch watching the Six One News, according to Sinn Féin's Cllr Sorca Clarke.

At a recent meeting of the Mullingar Municipal District,

Cllr Clarke called for legislation to be introduced to curb gambling advertising, sponsorship and promotion, particularly in relation to online gambling sites.

### Graffiti

"Graphic graffiti" is displayed

on a roadside facade in Clonmellon, according to Sinn Féin's Cllr Una D'Arcy.

Speaking at the monthly meeting of Mullingar Municipal District, Cllr D'Arcy urged that the offending artwork be removed as quickly as possible.