

## Press Release

### **Rise in shingles cases linked to universal varicella vaccination program**

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The results of a new study published in the October 1, 2003, issue of the European journal *Vaccine* indicate that a higher than expected number of shingles cases was reported among children with a previous history of chickenpox. The rates observed approach those normally seen only in older adults. Results of the study suggest mass vaccination with varicella (chickenpox) vaccine may be responsible for this adverse effect. Complications from shingles, which is caused by the reactivation of the chickenpox virus that lies dormant in the body, result in about three times the number of hospitalizations and five times the number of deaths than those from chickenpox disease itself. Shingles, usually mild in children, can be severe in adults.