

Unprotected People #10 Pertussis

Pertussis claims the lives of two infants

The deaths of two infants from pertussis were reported in the *San Francisco Chronicle* on July 2, 1998. The article reports that the pertussis victims were a 2-month-old boy who died on April 4, 1998, and a 2-month-old girl who died one month later.

The newspaper article, entitled "Bay Area Rash of Whooping Cough Cases: Unvaccinated children help spread the disease," leads off by saying, "Whooping cough, the childhood scourge that just won't go away, has increased in worrisome numbers in the San Francisco Bay Area."

At the time of the article's publication (July 2, 1998) there were, according to state epidemiologist Cynthia O'Malley, PhD, 198 cases of whooping cough in California, most of them concentrated in the Bay Area.

The article ends with this powerful statement from Santa Cruz County public health chief Betsy McCarty, RN, MS: "People who think they are doing the right thing are not getting their children vaccinated. They couldn't be more mistaken. This is as important as putting your kid in the car seat, seeing they have enough to eat, and locking up the poisons."

To read the entire article from the *San Francisco Chronicle's* website, go to: www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/1998/07/02/MN20754.DTL