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| |  | | --- | | Many lives might be saved if inoculations against cow flu were routinely administered to all people in areas where the disease is detected. However, since there is a small possibility that a person will die as a result of the inoculations, we cannot permit inoculations against cow flu to be routinely administered.  Write a response in which you discuss what specific evidence is needed to evaluate the argument and explain how the evidence would weaken or strengthen the argument. | |

Response

'Prevention is better than cure' is an age-old adage that says that it is better to prevent diseases, rather than curing them. The argument given claims that vaccinations against the cow flu cannot be administered, on the premise that there is a small possibility that a person will die as a result of it. The logic employed here is fallacious, and makes huge assumptions that, if false, can greatly weaken the argument. Enough evidence hasn't been provided to substantiate the argument, and simply making assumptions about reality isn't good practice, especially when ensuring public health safety.

First, the argument claims that the small possibility of death is sufficient to warrant a supposed ban on inoculations against cow flu. But the question that naturally arises here is, what is the death rate among people who contracted cow flu? Is the inoculation more lethal than the very disease it aims to prevent? If it is, in fact, more lethal, then the argument would be strengthened. However, in diseases such as COVID-19, flu, measles, etc., we have observed that the inoculated have a much lower probability of losing their lives as a result of it. Creating a vaccine takes a lot of research, trial and error, and numerous phases of testing. The argument does specify that there is an inoculation that could be possibly administered to the people, i.e., such a vaccine is in circulation. Hence, it must have withstood all the phases of testing, and must have been efficient, causing no more deaths than a certain low threshold. Thus, the line of reasoning employed based on the death rate is empirically wrong, since encouraging inoculations against the cow flu would cause much fewer people to die than if such a prevention measure were not utilised.

Second, the argument does concede that a lot of lives would be saved if inoculations were administered in all affected areas. This concession implies that many of these lives may not be saved if this measure is not taken. If the death rate was high for the vaccinated, this sentence wouldn't make any sense, and would be untrue. Hence, this premise simply solidifies our previous statement, that the death rate is not possibly higher for the vaccine than that of the disease.

Finally, it would be vital to take into account who the vaccine may have an adverse effect on. If the probability of a person dying as a result of the vaccine is related to factors such as age, gender, pregnancy, immuno-deficiency disorders, then we can simply not permit inoculations for those social groups for whom it would not work. If the vaccine has unfavourable side-effects on just pregnant people and the elderly, then it does not warrant keeping the vaccine away from all other groups of people. For such inoculation-vulnerable people, the vaccination could perhaps be delayed, or administered once further advancements have been made in the development of the vaccine. In the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, we observed that most governments administered the vaccine in different phases, starting with those who are more vulnerable to the disease, like the elderly, followed by focus on younger people. Pregnant people and those with immune system disorders were not given the vaccine until much later. This proves that the argument's reasoning in outright banning inoculations is incorrect, and does not consider what the 'possibility that a person will die' depends on. Evidence provided for these statistics could help make a better decision on who should be allowed to take the vaccine first, and who should not.

Thus, the arguments claim of disallowing inoculations based on the small possibility of death is false, and would be weakened by evidence in most cases. The only possible way for the argument to be strengthened would be if the vaccine has more lethality than the disease.

Evaluation:

* Mba crystal ball – 5.8
* Testbig – 4.0