

Evil in a syringe: do vaccines lead to autism research paper samples

[Family](#), [Parents](#)



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Naif Alsultan

Through watching a few hours of news programming or reading random newspapers, it could be easy to jump on the bandwagon when it comes to the causes of certain diseases, however, research and the resulting information seem to be changing and evolving constantly. Yet, despite information that indicates the previously held belief is not supported by science, there are individuals, sometimes quite influential ones, which discard the hours of research spent to disprove their beliefs, rather electing to stick with their previously held beliefs. Instead of taking steps to protect their children, many parents and concerned loved ones have elected not to participate in vaccination programs, which leave their children prone and exposed to a plethora of potentially dangerous and deadly diseases. So, in the face of facts, why do people continue to disregard years of research in favor of using fear tactics to disseminate their beliefs?

Autism and Vaccinations

In regards to autism and autism spectrum disorders, the vaccine known as MMR, or measles, mumps, and rubella series, is often cited as the source. While the link between autism and the MMR series of vaccinations were presented in a research journal based on what was disguised as science and unbiased practices, the researcher, Dr. Wakefield was misinformed, spreading possibly damaging information to the masses. Dr. Wakefield, upon conducting a convenience sample of a very small number of participants, suggested that there was a causal relationship between children developing autism spectrum disorders and the administration of the MMR series of vaccinations (Wakefield et al., 1998).

However, while Wakefield's research appeared in a well-regarded medical journal, it was redacted in 2010 due to the "junk science" and the inability of replicating the findings Wakefield cited in his original research. Further research was sparked by Wakefield's supposed findings, with the majority of research unveiling no such link between vaccines and the development of autism (Doja & Roberts, 2006).

Despite the holes being poked in the casual relationship once thought to be present between the vaccine and the development of autism and autism spectrum disorders, and the researcher who brought the link to light being banned from practicing medicine in his home country of Britain due to professional misconduct, there are still throngs of people who consider the link to be factual, refraining from vaccinating their children against the development of potentially pervasive and life-threatening diseases.

Right to Refrain?

The right to be able to decide what one puts in their bodies and the bodies of their children is a right that many individuals hold dearly. However, with the relatively recent movement, fueled by fear tactics and Hollywood figures, to refrain from vaccinations, there has been a global resurgence in diseases that were previously curtailed through the use of vaccinations. In the United States, in addition to the fervor surrounding the causal relationship between MMR and autism, most of the controversy surrounding vaccinations is focused on a mercury derived preservative that is present in vaccinations, known as thimerosal (Institute of Medicine, 2004). Not all countries include thimerosal in their MMR vaccines, so in those countries, such as Wakefield's native Great Britain, the MMR vaccine receives great attention and avoidance.

For parents who wish to take legal action to maintain their right to refrain from vaccinations, there is a special program, known as the federal Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (VICP), which was enacted in 1988 after a scare surrounding another combination of vaccines, the diphtheria-pertussis-tetanus (DPT) vaccination (Sugarman, 2007). The VICP has covered medical and personal injury costs of claimants, even when scientists have shown that claims of side effects related to the vaccinations are unfounded. However, proof of causation does not need to be shown between, for example, autism and the MMR vaccination combination, which has led many families to pursue such a line of action and filing class-action suits (Sugarman, 2007). While there are legal venues parents can pursue in order to opt out of their children from receiving these vaccinations, it has led to an increase in the

incidence of pertussis (whooping cough), polio, and other previously preventable diseases in the recent years (CDC, 2012), thus possibly increasing the risk of revisiting a global pandemic of preventable disease based on “junk science.”

Why is “Junk Science” Trusted?

Often junk science is used to advance special interests of hidden agendas through promoting faulty scientific data and analysis, such as what was proposed through Wakefield’s research. After publication of Wakefield’s research suggesting a link between vaccinations and the development of autism among children, it was discovered that Wakefield was working with lawyers who were pursuing litigation against the manufacturers of the MMR vaccination. Despite contradicting research, parents still believe the ill begotten findings concerning the dangers of vaccinations. It appears that, as suggested by Chabbris and Simons (2010), that these parents are falling prey to the messages propagated by the media and celebrities that there is a pattern and causal relationship where none actually is present.

As in Wakefield’s research, the observation of autism symptoms, such as delayed language skills and parallel play rather than interacting with their peers, appear to occur around the time that children receive their rounds of vaccinations. Thus, on the surface, it may appear that the autism symptoms are caused by the vaccinations. Such a hypothesis, while repeatedly unsupported, gives parents a reason and a place to point their fingers when their children start to display symptoms, believing the illusion of cause

(Chabris & Simons, 2010), as it aligns with the pattern, correlation, and chronology.

Conclusion

While parents may think that they are doing the right thing, by avoiding and opting out of the administering of vaccinations to their children, it appears that their decisions are based on bad science. Despite a number of studies indicating that there is no causal relationship between the series of vaccinations and autism, the news and other media outlets act to perpetuate the dissemination of “junk science.” The resurgence of once thought to be extinct illnesses due to a decrease in vaccinations should serve as a warning to parents and scientists alike to be more wary of what information they base their important decisions upon.

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