

HCCC REFERENCE 09/1695

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MARCH 1, 2010

**TO: MS LEANNE EVANS
INVESTIGATION OFFICER
HEALTH CARE COMPLAINTS COMMISSION**

**RE: MERYL DOREY AND THE AVN RESPONSE TO HCCC COMPLAINT
OF 7 SEPTEMBER 2009**

Dear Ms Evans,

The following is a critical analysis of ten articles directly referenced by Ms Meryl Dorey in her reply of September 2009 on behalf of herself and her organisation, the AVN, to the complaint submitted by Mr Ken McCleod.

All articles mentioned in this document are listed with their PubMed ID (PMID). This will make them easier to find, should any follow up be required. The PMID need only be copied and pasted into the PubMed search box (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed>) to bring up the article's details and often its abstract. Those without a stated PMID are from journals not indexed in the MEDLINE database.

Please note that the phrase 'Wakefield paper' refers to Dr Andrew Wakefield's 1998 study – reference [1].

The following material covers information on pages 18-19 of the 27 page version of the reply available at http://avn.org.au/library/images/pdfs/hccc_reply.pdf

It should be noted that Ms Dorey's claim that "*Dr Wakefield's study was only the first of many to indicate a very strong and, in some cases clinically verifiable connection between vaccination and the development of ASDs [autism spectrum disorders]*" is incorrect; the Wakefield paper itself does not come to that conclusion. The discussion of the Wakefield paper clearly states "*We did not prove an association between measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine and the syndrome described*" and suggests further research into such an association. The hype surrounding the MMR vaccine from Wakefield comes from a video released by the Royal Free hospital NHS trust, in which Wakefield asserts no causal link, yet calls for immunisations against measles, mumps and rubella to be separated [2].

It is also worth noting that despite the initial claim being that "*Research also suggests that there is a connection between MMR vaccination and the development of autism,...*", Ms Dorey's response to Mr McCleod's criticism of this statement is not to provide any research that suggests a connection between MMR and the development of autism. She instead chooses to list articles which she says hypothesise a vaccine

autism link. This kind of ‘side-stepping’ from a dis-proven argument (also known as ‘moving the goalposts’ – or even widening in this case) is dishonest, and reflects negatively on the credibility of both Ms Dorey and the AVN.

Despite Ms Dorey’s claim that “*Dr Wakefield’s study was only the first of many to indicate a very strong and, in some cases clinically verifiable connection between vaccination and the development of ASDs*” she provides no evidence for her statement of a clinically verifiable connection between vaccination and the development of ASDs. There has not been a single clinically verified case of a vaccine (or vaccines) being the cause of autism. For Ms Dorey to make such a grand statement without any justification is completely dishonest and dangerous.

Her selection of “*articles published in peer-reviewed journals... hypothesising that there could be a connection between vaccination and the development of ASDs*” is a collection of ten referenced pieces. It should be noted that hypothesising a connection does not constitute proof. This is most likely why Ms Dorey had merely *hypothesising* a link as her criteria for inclusion in the list – there is no evidence for such a connection; indeed, since Wakefield’s initial untruthful and discredited comments regarding the MMR vaccine much disconfirming evidence has emerged [3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8], including epidemiological studies [9, 10, 11 and 12].

- The first referenced paper in Ms Dorey’s reply, ‘*Key realities about autism, vaccines, vaccine-injury compensation Thimerosal, and autism-related research*’ (no PMID) is partially an attempt to rebut an earlier article [13] that appeared in *Skeptical Inquirer* magazine, explaining the lack of evidence for assuming the vaccine ingredient thimerosal causes autism, and the scare tactics used by the anti-vaccination movement. The entire article attempts to convince the reader of this disproved hypothesis. The lack of evidence for the hypothesis suits the ‘journal’ it is in: ‘*Medical Veritas*’.

The first paragraph of the abstract of this article sets the tone perfectly: “*The propaganda dispensed by Public health care and vaccine apologists is, at best, a weak attempt to rationalize the healthcare establishment’s positions using all the tools of doublespeak or, as George Orwell’s called it in his book 1984, “newspeak”, to: (a) mislead, (b) distort reality, (c) pretend to communicate, (d) make the bad seem good, (e) avoid and/or shift responsibility, (f) make the negative appear positive, (g) create a false verbal map of the world, and (h) create dissonance between reality and what their narrative said or did not say*”.

According to a message [14] from the “*Editor-in-Chief and President/Founder Medical Veritas International Inc*”, the peer review process in mainstream journals is used to quash information which could hurt the Journals’ owners and/or advertisers. Some of the ‘truths’ which *Medical Veritas* aims to expose include a raft of conspiracy theories, regarding vaccines [15], autism [16], shaken baby syndrome [15 and 17] and HIV [18]. This journal, and indeed the paper, is not a reliable source of unbiased, scientifically accurate information, but rather a haven for conspiracy theories that do not pass the peer-review process.

- The second paper, ‘*An Investigation of the Association Between MMR Vaccination and Autism in Denmark*’ (no PMID) was published in the ‘*Journal of American Physicians and Surgeons*’, or JPANDS, the journal of the *Association of American Physicians and Surgeons* (AAPS). AAPS is a far right-wing organisation which fills its publications with papers that mirror the organisation’s fringe, far right-wing ideals. These include (in JPANDS) HIV denial [19], abortion causing premature birth and birth defects in the mother’s future pregnancies [20], the belief that the “*gay male lifestyle*” leads to a life expectancy shortened by 20 years [21] and casting doubt on the concept of shaken baby syndrome [22]. This non-peer-reviewed journal is not an accurate source of unbiased information.
- The third paper, ‘*Gastrointestinal abnormalities in children with autistic disorder*’ (PMID: 10547242) observes “*The upper gastrointestinal evaluations of children with autistic disorder support the presence of a chronic inflammatory process in the gut, as reported by Wakefield et al.*”. That is, the paper reports a high correlation between ASD and chronic inflammation in the gut, as did the Wakefield paper. The paper at no point makes any reference to any connection between vaccines and autism, with no reference to vaccines at all, in contrast to Ms Dorey’s statement preceding the references.
- The fourth paper, ‘*Constipation With Acquired Megarectum in Children With Autism*’ (PMID: 14523189) describes a correlation between children with ASDs and constipation with acquired megarectum. This paper does not address vaccines or the cause of ASDs.
- The fifth paper referenced, ‘*Autism, viral infection and measles mumps rubella vaccination*’ (PMID: 10731332) is a review, headed by Andrew Wakefield (of the Wakefield paper) in which he puts forward no new evidence, but suggests that “*MMR vaccination is a candidate worthy of investigation*” regarding the cause of autism. Of the ten articles Ms Dorey references, this is the only one from a mainstream, peer-reviewed journal to hypothesise a vaccine-autism link – and it is done so by Dr Andrew Wakefield, who has been shown to have had significant conflicts of interest, including: a patent on a monovalent alternative to the MMR vaccine [23] and being paid to find a link between MMR and autism by a lawyer representing parents making a court case blaming their children’s autism on the vaccine [24]. Interestingly, those conflicts of interest are undisclosed in this article.
- The sixth paper, ‘*Measles virus and autism*’ (PMID: 11085720) is a letter published in the *Lancet*, sent in by Wakefield and colleagues, replying to criticisms of the research methodologies used in two of their previous studies. This defence of their previous studies is just that, and does not mention any hypothesis linking vaccines to autism.
- The seventh paper, ‘*Measles Vaccination and Inflammatory Bowel Disease: A National British Cohort Study*’ (PMID: 11151885) found no association between the monovalent measles vaccine and all three of the conditions observed, which curiously do not include ASDs. The paper does not mention ASDs, and at no point hypothesises a vaccine-autism link.

- The eighth paper, '*Potential viral pathogenic mechanism for new variant inflammatory bowel disease*' (PMID: 11950955) examined an association between infection with the measles virus and the pathology of inflammatory bowel disease in autistic children. Despite being described by Ms Dorey in the preceding explanation as a study hypothesising a connection between vaccines and autism, this article does not mention any form of vaccination.
- The ninth paper, '*Detection of measles virus in children with ileo-colonic lymphoid nodular hyperplasia, enterocolitis and developmental disorder*' (PMID: 12142949) is a proceedings paper from the conference 'Meeting on Microbiology, Immunology and Toxicology of autism and other developmental disorders'. It is a paper that presents evidence of a link between the measles virus and the gut problems suffered by a large proportion of autistic children. Despite being put under the subheading 'vaccines and autism' in the journal, the paper makes no mention of any vaccine, and does not hypothesise a vaccine-autism link.
- The tenth paper, '*Abnormal Measles-Mumps-Rubella Antibodies and CNS Autoimmunity in Children with Autism*' (PMID: 12145534) suggests that the immune response of autistic people to the MMR vaccine is different to that of non-autistic people. They found an increase in antibodies against myelin basic protein (MBP) in autistic children that had the MMR vaccine. As MBP is found in myelin (part of neurons) it was hypothesised that the production of these antibodies may contribute to the symptoms of autism, yet a causal relationship was not hypothesised.

To follow up, as without doing so the previous paper and accompanying explanation are likely to be misconstrued by those who initially misconstrued the paper, a later study [25] found no such correlation in autistic children.

It should be noted that the AVN's reply stated these papers were "*a selection of the many articles published in peer-reviewed journals... hypothesising that there could be a connection between vaccination and the development of ASDs*". Of the ten papers cited, only three hypothesise this. Two of them are in journals which are not mainstream, nor peer-reviewed, and are known for publishing absurd, fringe conspiracy theories. The third was a review article, with Wakefield as one of the authors.

It is telling that of the ten articles Ms Dorey selected, the only three that support her assertion are either published in fringe conspiracy journals, and the other is written by Dr A. Wakefield, who has well-documented conflicts of interest.

The ten articles were referenced by Ms Dorey in an attempt to prove that more research, other than the Wakefield paper, suggest a connection between the MMR vaccine and ASDs:

"In section 7.1.3.2, Mr McLeod cites the AVN's statement that, "Research also suggests that there is a connection between MMR vaccination and the development of autism,..." He then goes on to say that, "the AVN is referring to the Wakefield study published in the Lancet.""

As has been shown in this analysis, the AVN's initial statement "*Research also suggests that there is a connection between MMR vaccination and the development of autism,...*" remains demonstrably untrue, with research suggesting a lack of association [4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12]. Ms Dorey's apparent attempt to distract from this, by instead listing articles which she stated were published in peer reviewed journals and hypothesise "*a connection between vaccination and the development of ASDs*" simply drew attention to her own lack of evidence for this claim. The selection of articles Ms Dorey included suggests she is at best ignorant of the lack of evidence for her claims and those of her organisation, or at worst intentionally deceptive.

Signed,

Tom Sidwell

References:

- [1]: Ileal-lymphoid-nodular hyperplasia, non-specific colitis, and pervasive developmental disorder in children; Wakefield AJ, Murch SH, Anthony A, Linnell J, Casson DM, Malik M, Berelowitz M, Dhillon AP, Thomson MA, Harvey P, Valentine A, Davies SE, Walker-Smith JA. *Lancet*. 1998 Feb 28;351(9103):637-41. PMID: 9500320 (Now retracted)
- [2]: <http://briandeer.com/wakefield/royal-video.htm> Transcript of the video released by the Royal Free Hospital NHS trust.
- [3]: Autism and measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine: no epidemiological evidence for a causal association; Taylor B, Miller E, Farrington CP, Petropoulos MC, Favot-Mayaud I, Li J, Waight PA. *Lancet*. 1999 Jun 12;353(9169):2026-9. PMID: 10376617
- [4]: Time trends in autism and in MMR immunization coverage in California; Dales L, Hammer SJ, Smith NJ. *JAMA*. 2001 Mar 7;285(9):1183-5. PMID: 11231748
- [5]: Mumps, measles, and rubella vaccine and the incidence of autism recorded by general practitioners: a time trend analysis; Kaye JA, del Mar Melero-Montes M, Jick H. *BMJ*. 2001 Feb 24;322(7284):460-3. PMID: 11222420
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- [9]: Measles, mumps, and rubella vaccination and bowel problems or developmental regression in children with autism: population study; Taylor B, Miller E, Lingam R, Andrews N, Simmons A, Stowe J. *BMJ*. 2002 Feb 16;324(7334):393-6. PMID: 11850369
- [10]: No evidence for links between autism, MMR and measles virus; Chen W, Landau S, Sham P, Fombonne E. *Psychol Med*. 2004 Apr;34(3):543-53. PMID: 15259839
- [11]: No evidence for a new variant of measles-mumps-rubella-induced autism; Fombonne E, Chakrabarti S. *Pediatrics*. 2001 Oct;108(4):E58. PMID: 11581466

[12]: MMR-vaccine and regression in autism spectrum disorders: negative results presented from Japan; Uchiyama T, Kurosawa M, Inaba Y. *J Autism Dev Disord.* 2007 Feb;37(2):210-7. PMID: 16865547

[13]: Novella, S. *The Anti-Vaccination Movement* *Skeptical Inquirer* 31.6, Nov/Dec 2007 – mentioned on the front cover as ‘*Vaccines and Autism: Myths and Misconceptions*’

[14]: <http://www.medicalveritas.com/images/MessageSenEd.pdf> “*Message from the Editor-in-Chief concerning Medical Veritas®: The Journal of Medical Truth*”, Gary S. Goldman PhD.

[15]: Shaken baby syndrome or medical malpractice?; Ali, A.M. *Medical Veritas*, 2004 Apr; 1(1):117-29

[16]: Digestion-gut-autism connection: the Specific Carbohydrate Diet; Elaine, G. *Medical Veritas*, 2004 Nov; 1(2):261-71

[17]: Analysis of causes that led to subdural bleeding and rib fractures in the case of Baby Patrick Gorman; Ali, A.M. *Medical Veritas*, 2006 Nov; 3(2):1019-40

[18]: Hypothesis--Examining the causes of AIDS; Ali, A.M. *Medical Veritas*, 2006 Apr; 3(1):901-13

[19]: Questioning HIV/AIDS: Morally Reprehensible or Scientifically Warranted?; Bauer, H. *JPANDS*. 2007; 12 (4): 116.

[20]: Induced Abortion and Risk of Later Premature Births; Brent, R, Calhoun, BC. *JPANDS* 2003; 8 (2): 46–9

[21]: Homosexuality: Some Neglected Considerations; Lehrman, NS. *JPANDS* 10 (3): 80-2

[22]: "Shaken Baby Syndrome": Do Confessions by Alleged Perpetrators Validate the Concept?; Leestma, J. *JPANDS* 11(1): 14-6

[23]: <http://briandeer.com/wakefield/vaccine-patent.htm> The patent Andrew Wakefield had on an alternative monovalent vaccine, which represents a substantial conflict of interest.

[24]: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article1265373.ece> *MMR doctor given legal aid thousands.* The news article in the *Sunday Times* where the payments to Wakefield, totalling “£435,643 in fees, plus £3,910 expenses” were first exposed.

[25]: Are there enhanced MBP autoantibodies in autism?; Libbey JE, Coon HH, Kirkman NJ, Sweeten TL, Miller JN, Stevenson EK, Lainhart JE, McMahon WM, Fujinami RS. *J Autism Dev Disord.* 2008 Feb;38(2):324-32. PMID: 17588145