

For Immediate Release
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Autism Advocacy Organizations and Parent Groups Support Dr. Andrew Wakefield *Urging Both Scientists and Journalists to Do More Thorough Research Into Vaccines and Autism*

Last week, an article in the *British Medical Journal (BMJ)*, written by a freelance newspaper reporter, Brian Deer, created a media firestorm in the United States. In his article, Brian Deer accuses Dr. Andrew Wakefield of deliberate fraud regarding his 1998 case series, which was published in the British journal, *The Lancet*. Dr. Wakefield reported that the children in his case series were suffering from a novel form of bowel disease and that parents reported a temporal link between the onset of symptoms and receipt of the MMR vaccine. Contrary to what has been reported in the media over the years, Dr. Wakefield never stated that the MMR vaccine caused autism. The full text of the original paper is available at www.generationrescue.org

These libelous accusations are based on the flimsiest possible construct. Deer claims fraud on the basis of differences between the case histories in the *Lancet* study and the children's private medical records which Deer obtained under questionable circumstances. Since the team at the Royal Free Hospital never had access to the children's private medical records, it was impossible for them to know what was in them and, therefore, impossible for them to fraudulently report something different. It is standard practice in medicine for a specialist seeing a new patient to take a new history. Of the parents involved in the original study, none have made any complaint, at any time, against Dr. Wakefield. In the case of the only parent we can confirm Brian Deer actually spoke to, Deer used false pretenses and the alias "Brian Lawrence" to obtain the interview. The parent did not turn over any medical records to him.

The undersigned autism organizations, representing thousands of parents, are deeply disturbed by this most recent character assassination of Dr. Andrew Wakefield. This is an attempt to discredit a doctor who has been extraordinarily courageous in treating and researching children suffering with both bowel disease and autism. He has paid a high personal price for his refusal to walk away from children who are suffering and has earned the utmost respect from the families of these children. We believe this is an industry-driven attempt to shift public attention away from legitimate concerns about vaccine reactions and the development of autism. Science, even controversial findings, should not be distorted by fear or greed.

The truth in this story is that Dr. Wakefield's findings of bowel disease in association with autism have been replicated (see references) and his work along with that of other doctors has advanced the treatment of these children to the point that the journal, *Pediatrics*, has published a paper on the treatment for gastrointestinal symptoms in children with autism. The issue of whether MMR is causal for this subgroup of autistic children remains an open question. The epidemiological studies that claim to prove there is no link between the MMR and autism have not had the statistical power to rule out a link for a subset of susceptible children. Much study remains to be done. Attempts to "shoot the messenger" will only result in further erosion of public trust.

Parents of children with autism encourage the media to dig deeper and provide comprehensive investigations and balanced reporting. For more information or to schedule an interview please contact Rebecca Estep rebecca.estepp@gmail.com 858-829.6454

Age of Autism
Autism Action Network
Autism Media Channel
Autism One
Autism File Global
Autism Research Institute
Elizabeth Birt Center for Autism Law and Advocacy
Generation Rescue
National Autism Association
Schafer Autism Report
TACA-Talk About Curing Autism
The Autism Trust USA/UK
The Coalition for SafeMinds

The following peer-reviewed papers support Dr. Wakefield's original findings:

Furlano R, Anthony A, Day R, Brown A, Mc Garvey L, Thomson M, et al. "Colonic CD8 and T cell filtration with epithelial damage in children with autism." *J Pediatr* 2001;138:366-72.
Sabra S, Bellanti JA, Colon AR. "Ileal lymphoid hyperplasia, non-specific colitis and pervasive developmental disorder in children". *The Lancet* 1998;352:234-5.
Torrente F., Machado N., Perez-Machado M., Furlano R., Thomson M., Davies S., Wakefield AJ, Walker-Smith JA, Murch SH. "Enteropathy with T cell infiltration and epithelial IgG deposition in autism." *Molecular Psychiatry*. 2002;7:375-382.
Wakefield AJ, Anthony A, Murch SH, Thomson M, Montgomery SM, Davies S, Walker-Smith JA. "Enterocolitis in children with developmental disorder." *American Journal of Gastroenterology* 2000;95:2285-2295.
Ashwood P, Anthony A, Pellicer AA, Torrente F, Wakefield AJ. "Intestinal lymphocyte populations in children with regressive autism: evidence for extensive mucosal immunopathology." *Journal of Clinical Immunology*, 2003;23:504-517.

The following peer-reviewed papers replicate Dr. Wakefield's original findings:

Gonzalez, L. et al., "Endoscopic and Histological Characteristics of the Digestive Mucosa in Autistic Children with gastro-Intestinal Symptoms". *Arch Venez Pueric Pediatr*, 2005;69:19-25.
Balzola, F., et al., "Panenteric IBD-like disease in a patient with regressive autism shown for the first time by wireless capsule enteroscopy: Another piece in the jig-saw of the gut-brain syndrome?" *American Journal of Gastroenterology*, 2005. 100(4): p. 979- 981.
Balzola F et al . "Autistic enterocolitis: confirmation of a new inflammatory bowel disease in an Italian cohort of patients." *Gastroenterology* 2005;128(Suppl. 2);A-303.

These are the articles on treatment of gastrointestinal symptoms in autistic children:

Buie T, et al. *Pediatrics*. 2010 Jan;125 Suppl 1:S19-29. Recommendations for evaluation and treatment of common gastrointestinal problems in children with ASDs.
Buie T, et al. *Pediatrics*. 2010 Jan;125 Suppl 1:S1-18. Evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment of gastrointestinal disorders in individuals with ASDs: a consensus report.