



PRESS RELEASE

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Tragic Suppression of Science

SafeMinds protests the GMC sanctioning of Dr. Andrew Wakefield for exposing MMR vaccine injuries and calls for independent vaccine safety agency and Congressional hearings on government's lax record on safety issues

Today, it was confirmed that Dr. Andrew Wakefield and his colleague, Dr. John Walker-Smith, will lose their licenses to practice medicine in the UK. This concludes the longest medical hearings ever held by the UK's General Medical Council. SafeMinds, as an advocate for vaccine safety and evidence-based medicine deplores this travesty of "justice." Revoking Dr. Wakefield's medical license does nothing to address the fact that children continue to be injured by vaccines as documented by the 1,000 plus awards issued by the Federal Vaccine Injury Compensation Program and the paucity of science aimed at understanding and preventing such injury.

Dr. Wakefield was an active researcher in 1998, investigating links between infectious diseases and inflammatory bowel conditions and it was perfectly logical that he listened to the parents of his autistic patients and took the steps to investigate their reports. In fact, to ignore their reports would have been true "misconduct." Dr. Wakefield is the victim of his own integrity as a scientist. Had he not had such a sterling reputation, his 1998 study and his following publications would not have had the impact that they did. Several epidemiologic studies were put together by public health authorities to rebut his hypothesis, but none directly investigated the subgroup of autistic children with the original profile and none had the statistical power to rule out the possibility that MMR vaccine was injuring a certain population of children. As a result of their inability to quash the controversy around MMR and autism, the authorities jumped on the chance to discredit Dr. Wakefield provided by a UK reporter working for a newspaper with significant ties to vaccine manufacturers.

Vaccine safety concerns are at an all time high as evidenced by a recent study published in *Pediatrics* that documents one half of all parents have serious concerns over vaccine side effects, and one in four believe that some vaccines cause autism. Efforts to silence scientists like Dr. Wakefield whose finding regarding a subset of children who developed autism and severe gastrointestinal disease after immunization has been replicated in [numerous studies](#) do little more than fuel vaccine safety concerns with the public. There is an urgent need for Congressional oversight and the establishment of a separate vaccine safety agency outside of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) which has obvious financial and philosophic conflicts of interest and has failed to comply with the terms of the 1986 Vaccine Injury Compensation Act (VICA) to provide critical vaccine safety science.

SafeMinds believes that all plausible hypotheses as to the causation of autism should be fully investigated by independent scientists. We applaud Dr. Wakefield's principled stand and willingness to go where the science leads him regardless of the personal costs. Ultimately, taking away his license is unjust and a disservice to all those his research has helped. The urgency of this type of research is underscored by the fact that approximately 40,000 children will be diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder this year in the United States alone.

To interview Dr. Wakefield contact Jen Hobbs - jenhobbs@skyhorsepublishing.com 845.863.6448

The Coalition for SafeMinds (Sensible Action for Ending Mercury-Induced Neurological Disorders) is a nonprofit organization founded to investigate and raise awareness of the risks to infants and children of exposure to mercury from medical products, including thimerosal in vaccines. Further information about SafeMinds and the harmful effects from mercury exposure may be found at www.safeminds.org.