



Email: info@vaccinechoicecanada.com
Mail: P.O. Box 169, Winlaw, BC, V0G 2J0
Web site: www.vaccinechoicecanada.com

April 2, 2017

National Post
365 Bloor St. East, 3rd Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M4W 3L4

To: Kevin Libin, Editor NP Comment

Anne Marie Owens, Editor

Re: Lack of Journalistic Integrity

Dear Mr. Libin and Ms. Owens

I'm writing in response to the commentary by National Post columnist, Robert Fulford - **Anti-Vaxxers are Winning as Ignorance and Pseudo-Science Vanquish Intelligence** (National Post – February 17, 2017). Mr. Fulford makes a number of statements that are either deceptive or outright dishonest and require retraction and correction. (<http://news.nationalpost.com/full-comment/robert-fulford-anti-vaxxers-are-winning-as-ignorance-and-pseudo-science-vanquish-intelligence>)

False Accusations

Mr. Fulford gives Dr. Wakefield far too much credit for what he inaccurately describes as the “*anti-vaccine*” movement. The concern about vaccine safety is not “*anti-vaccine*”. This movement has been active and substantive long before Dr. Wakefield and 12 other researchers acknowledged the claims of parents of a possible relationship between the MMR vaccine and their children’s development of autism.

Mr. Fulford seems unaware that “the dark shadow over vaccination” has existed for more than two centuries and began with the small pox vaccination program, which was a complete failure and caused more deaths than it prevented.



City of Toronto Archives, Fonds 1244, Item 2517

The shadow continued with the polio vaccine in the 1950s, which also had significant failures and unintended adverse effects. The author seems unaware of the disastrous Cutter vaccine that caused polio in children and was eventually withdrawn; or the contamination of the polio vaccine seed stocks with SV40, a monkey virus that causes cancer in humans. It is estimated that more than one hundred million Americans were contaminated with SV40. SV40 is found in cancer tumors today.

The shadow grew in the 1980s with the whole cell DPT shot that caused significant neurological damage in children and was the impetus for the creation of the US Vaccine Injury Compensation Program in 1986. My son was a victim of this unsafe vaccine product. This vaccine product has since been withdrawn from the North American market.

The shadow was extended by the MMR product licensed in the UK in the 1980s, which used the Urabe strain of mumps virus. This is the vaccine product Dr. Wakefield expressed concern about. It is also the same vaccine product the Ontario government refused to license. The UK government withdrew the license for this vaccine in 1992 following evidence of increased risk of convulsions and aseptic meningitis 15-35 days after vaccination.

<https://academic.oup.com/aje/article/165/6/704/63700/Risks-of-Convulsion-and-Aseptic-Meningitis>

Mr. Fulford seems unaware, or chooses to ignore, that the vaccine industry has been forced to withdraw numerous vaccines throughout its history because of the significant injuries and harm these vaccines have caused. This includes the swine flu vaccine, whole cell DPT vaccine, MMR vaccine (Urabe strain), and the oral polio

vaccine (OPV), among others.

To imply that Dr. Wakefield is responsible for the “anti-vaccine” movement shows a profound ignorance of the history of the vaccine industry, and the many generations of parents concerned about the safety of vaccines.

False Statements About Dr. Wakefield

Fulford makes a number of false statements about Dr. Wakefield. Fulford seems unaware that the findings of Dr. Wakefield and 12 other researchers in the Lancet paper were never debunked as many media pundits claim, or “utterly false” as Fulford reported. Dr. Wakefield’s study examined the relationship between bowel disease and regressive developmental disorders. His findings have been replicated by dozens of laboratories around the world and this relationship is now accepted medical science. http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/130/Supplement_2/S160

Dr. Wakefield never claimed that their case study proved vaccines cause autism; nor was this the intent of the case study. Dr. Wakefield’s own statement in the Lancet paper is: *“We did not prove an association between measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine and the syndrome described.”* Dr. Wakefield concluded that: *“Further investigations are needed to examine this syndrome and its possible relation to this vaccine.”*

Dr. Wakefield, when asked by the media, did recommend parents use the single dose vaccines for measles, mumps and rubella rather than the MMR shot, until the risk of injecting three live viruses at once was better understood. Hardly the action of an “anti-vaxxer”. It was the UK government’s decision to withdraw the license for the single measles vaccine, and Merck’s decision to stop producing single dose vaccines in the US and Canada that gave parents no choice but to accept the triple live virus vaccine or not vaccinate.

It’s clear the UK government’s intention was the protection of the triple virus product rather than the protection of children. Any reduction in the rate of immunization for measles, mumps and rubella is the responsibility of the UK government and Merck. Blaming Dr. Wakefield is dishonest.

Vaccine – Autism Link

Fulford also seems completely unaware of the substantial and growing body of evidence of a vaccine – autism link. Instead Fulford quotes Dr. Peter J. Hotez, a pediatrician who directs the vaccine development centre at Texas Children’s Hospital in Houston. Hotez says, *“no one has ever shown a link between vaccines and autism”*. Hotez seems oblivious to the research in his own field or is exercising willful blindness.

The body of evidence of a vaccine – autism link includes the following:

- A report in the [Pace Environmental Law Review Journal](http://digitalcommons.pace.edu/pelr/vol28/iss2/6) reviewed 83 cases of vaccine-induced brain injury that resulted in an autism diagnosis, which were compensated by the U.S. Federal Vaccine Injury Compensation system <http://digitalcommons.pace.edu/pelr/vol28/iss2/6>
- There are now more than **128 independent studies** that show a relationship between vaccines and autism. <https://www.scribd.com/doc/220807175/128-Research-Papers-Supporting-the-Vaccine-Autism-Link>
- Dr. William Thompson, a Senior Scientist with the Vaccine Safety Division of the CDC and the lead statistician and co-author of the 2004 CDC study that is used by vaccine proponents to deny a link between the MMR vaccine and autism took whistleblower status in 2014 to reveal CDC scientists colluded to commit scientific fraud in order to obscure the link between the MMR vaccine and autism.

Dr. Thompson claims the federal agency ordered him and his colleagues to destroy study findings that confirmed a link between the MMR vaccine and autism.

Representative Bill Posey read Dr. Thompson's statement into the Congressional record.

<https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4546421/rep-bill-posey-calling-investigation-cdcs-mmr-reasearch-fraud>

This alarming disclosure is the basis of the 2016 documentary [Vaxxed: From Cover-Up to Catastrophe](#). The media, to its discredit, has actively tried to censor this film, refused to inform the public of this significant disclosure, and has failed to advocate for a full investigation of Thompson's claims.

- Award-winning journalist, Sharyl Attkisson investigated the vaccine-autism link and compiled an extensive list of studies that show a vaccine-autism link. ([What the News Isn't Saying About Vaccine-Autism Studies](#) – updated November 27, 2016). <https://sharylattkisson.com/what-the-news-isnt-saying-about-vaccine-autism-studies>

Attkisson concluded –

*“The body of evidence on both sides is open to interpretation.
People have every right to disbelieve the studies on one side.
But it is disingenuous to pretend they do not exist.”*

Ms. Attkisson's comment applies directly to Dr. Hotez's statement denying any

evidence of a vaccine – autism link. Dr. Hotez has every right to disbelieve the studies on one side of the debate. But to state there is “no one has ever shown a link between vaccines and autism” is simply dishonest and irresponsible.

It would appear both Mr. Fulford and Dr. Hotez are intentionally withholding information with the express purpose of misleading the public. This is scientism, not science. It is unfortunate the National Post doesn't have investigative journalists of the courage and integrity of Ms. Attkisson.

- Dr. Bernadine Healy, the former head of the National Institutes of Health, stated that the vaccine-autism link is not a “myth”. Dr. Healy disclosed that her colleagues at the Institute of Medicine did not wish to investigate the possible link between vaccines and autism because they feared the impact it would have on the vaccination program. This failure to fully investigate the vaccine-autism link is politics, not science.

There is an abundance of evidence that a vaccine-autism link exists. It is dishonest and irresponsible journalism to claim there is “no evidence”. Anyone who makes this claim is offering propaganda, not science.

“Facts do not cease to exist because they are ignored.”
~ Aldous Huxley

False Statements About Measles Mortality

Fulford offers more distortion when reporting on the mortality of measles. Fulford states: *“In the young, measles is a lethal disease, a hard point to remember. It kills roughly 100,000 children around the world every year.”*

Citing mortality from measles in third world countries and implying this same risk exists with children living in Canada is dishonest. Virtually all of the deaths in developing countries attributed to measles are the result of extreme poverty and poor health conditions. Their deaths could have been prevented with proper nutrition, clean water, and appropriate medical care. To imply these deaths could have been prevented by a measles vaccine is naïve and dishonest.

During the ten year period of 2004 – 2015 there were zero deaths attributed to measles in North America. Since then one case of death has been attributed to measles, however there were confounding factors. At the same time the measles vaccine has been linked to at least 108 deaths in the United States. A child is more at risk of dying traveling by automobile to a clinic to receive a vaccine than dying due to contracting measles.



The mortality of measles declined more than 99% before the introduction of the measles vaccine. Measles in healthy and well-nourished children is a relatively benign illness. The media-induced hysteria and fear mongering that is evident in Fulford’s commentary is dishonest, a distortion of the facts, and does a great disservice to the public.

“In this fear-based scenario, the questioning voice of reason is drowned out amid the hysteria surrounding the emerging ‘killer infections,’ which are such a favorite media topic. The propagation of fear by the media and by its sources in the public health industry has resulted in a growth of power in this industry far beyond the usual checks and balances of our democracy.”

~ Dr. Philip F. Incao MD

False Statements About Robert Kennedy Jr.

Mr. Fulford’s continues with his dishonesty and distortions by referring to Mr. Robert Kennedy Jr. as “a notable anti-vaccine activist”. The evidence does not support this statement.

Mr. Kennedy has clearly stated he supports the childhood vaccination program. He admits to having fully vaccinated his six children. Nowhere in his public statements has Mr. Kennedy advocated against vaccinations.

Mr. Kennedy has, however, been very critical about the lack of credible evidence of the safety of the current vaccine program, and the conflicted interests within the Vaccine Safety Division of the CDC. Mr. Kennedy is internationally recognized for his work on the toxic effects of mercury. Mercury is an ingredient used in vaccines as a preservative and can still be found in select vaccines today despite claims made by the media and vaccine industry that there is no mercury in vaccines. A more accurate descriptor of Mr. Kennedy’s position relative to vaccines would be “vaccine safety critic” or “vaccine safety advocate”.

Biased Journalism

Labeling individuals who express concern about vaccine safety, effectiveness, or necessity as “anti-vaxx” is clearly intended to bias the discussion and over simplify a critical and complex issue. Such biased journalism would be obvious were Fulford to

refer to those expressing concern about the safety of a particular medication as “anti-drug”. Such labeling is dishonest and irresponsible.

The movement that is raising concerns about the safety of the current vaccine program is typically neither pro or anti vaccination. Rather this movement is characterized by a commitment to safeguarding the right of Canadians to make voluntary and informed decisions about health care, and demand independent and verifiable scientific evidence of the safety of the vaccine program. I would expect all journalists to support these efforts rather than undermine them.

Mr. Fulford would be advised to consider the advice of Dr. Peter Doshi, Associate Editor for the **British Medical Journal**. Doshi makes the following statements about good journalism as pertains to vaccinations:

<http://www.bmj.com/content/356/bmj.j661.full?ijkey=PLlsazuxmr6PVC1&keytype=ref>

Good journalism on this topic will require abandoning current practices of avoiding interviewing, understanding, and presenting critical voices out of fear that expressing any criticism amounts to presenting a “false balance” that will result in health scares.

*It does matter if the vast majority of doctors or scientists agree on something. But medical journalists should be among the first to realize that while evidence matters, **so too do the legitimate concerns of patients**. And if patients have concerns, doubts, or suspicions — for example, about the safety of vaccines, this **does not mean they are “anti-vaccine.”***

Doshi goes further in addressing those journalists who use the term “anti-vaccine”:

“approaches that label anybody and everybody who raises questions about the right headedness of current vaccine policies as “anti-vaccine” fail on several accounts.

Firstly, they fail to accurately characterize the nature of the concern. Many parents of children with developmental disorders who question the role of vaccines had their children vaccinated. Anti-vaccination is an ideology, and people who have their children vaccinated seem unlikely candidates for the title.

*Secondly, they lump all vaccines together as if the decision about risks and benefits **is the same irrespective of disease** — polio, pertussis, smallpox, mumps, diphtheria, hepatitis B, influenza, varicella, HPV, Japanese encephalitis — or vaccine type — live attenuated, inactivated whole cell, split virus, high dose, low dose, adjuvanted, monovalent, polyvalent, etc. This seems about as intelligent as categorizing people into “pro-drug” and “anti-drug” camps depending on whether they have ever voiced concern over the potential side effects of any drug.*

*Thirdly, labeling people concerned about the safety of vaccines as “anti-vaccine” risks entrenching positions. The label (or its derogatory derivative “anti-vaxxer”) **is a form***

of attack. It stigmatizes the mere act of even asking an open question about what is known and unknown about the safety of vaccines.

Fourthly, the label too quickly assumes that there are “two sides” to every question, and that the “two sides” are polar opposites. This “you’re either with us or against us” thinking is unfit for medicine.

Many parents who deliberate on decisions regarding their children’s health ultimately make decisions — such as to vaccinate or not vaccinate — with lingering uncertainty about whether they were right. And among those uncertainties are the known and unknown side effects that each vaccine carries.

Contrary to the suggestion — generally implicit — that vaccines are risk free (and therefore why would anyone ever resist official recommendations), the reality is that officially sanctioned written medical information on vaccines is — just like drugs — filled with information about common, uncommon, and unconfirmed but possible harms.

Medical journalists have an obligation to the truth. But journalists must also ensure that patients come first, which means a fresh approach to covering vaccines. It’s time to listen—seriously and respectfully—to patients’ concerns, not demonize them.”

Increasing Mistrust of Vaccine Science

I suggest the increasing mistrust of the vaccine industry is because it presents as definitive when it isn’t; and it lacks honesty and transparency. Much of what is offered as vaccine science is pseudo-science - marketing propaganda masquerading as science. Fulford would be more worthy of trust if he were honest about the state of the science as pertains to vaccination. I have attached a document outlining 18 facts about the current state of vaccine science in Canada.

Mr. Fulford also shows willful blindness and callous disregard for those children whose lives have been destroyed by vaccine injury. He prefers to ignore these life-altering experiences and insists on blaming increasing vaccine hesitancy on Hollywood celebrities. This is shameful behaviour and more typical of a gossip columnist than a journalist with integrity. This kind of journalism erodes confidence in the National Post as honest purveyors of the truth, and undermines the credibility of the vaccine program. It appears it is Mr. Fulford who is guilty of ignorance and adherence to pseudo-science.

Vaccine Choice Canada has written an extensive report on Canada’s reporting on vaccine adverse events. This report should be of concern to every journalist in this country: <http://vaccinechoicecanada.com/wp-content/uploads/Vaccine-Safety-Report-2-20B29E.pdf>

*“The secret of freedom lies in educating people,
whereas the secret of tyranny is in keeping them ignorant.”*

- Robespierre

Responsible Journalism & Responsible Science

If Mr. Fulford is sincere about being a responsible journalist, a retraction of the inaccurate statements made in his commentary is in order, as is an apology to those whose lives and experiences he has denied, disrespected, and demonized.

If Mr. Fulford is serious about the importance of responsible science, a good place to start is to advocate for a robust, long-term ‘vaccinated vs. non-vaccinated study’ to provide the scientific evidence needed to determine whether the current vaccine schedule is as safe and effective as claimed by the medical industry.

Mr. Fulford should also encourage the creation of an independent ‘Vaccine Safety and Science Integrity Commission’, rather than resist such accountability. The vaccine industry is the only industry, other than the nuclear industry, that is not legally responsible for the safety of their products. This has created a dangerous situation made even more dangerous by the efforts of government and industry, supported by mainstream media, to erode our medical and Charter rights to informed consent.

If the current vaccine program is based upon sound and credible science, there is nothing to fear. If, however, vaccine science is “pseudo science”; is fraudulent and based upon deception, distortion, corruption and conflicted interests, those who promulgate this fraud, including Mr. Fulford, need to be held accountable.

I look forward to your considered response.

Sincerely,



Ted Kuntz, parent of a vaccine injured child
Vice President – Vaccine Choice Canada

cc.

Vaccine Choice Canada

Mr. Robert Fulford

Attachment: 18 Facts the Ontario Government Likely Won't Tell You in Their
Vaccine Education Sessions