

May 29, 2018

CBC Ombudsman
P.O. Box 500 Station A
Toronto, Ontario M5W 1E6

To the Attention of: Esther Enkins, CBC Ombudsman (ombudsman@cbc.ca)

Dear Ms. Enkins,

I'm writing to register another formal complaint about the lack of journalistic integrity, accuracy, and honesty by the Canadian Broadcast Corporation. Specifically, I wish to bring to your attention the May 24, 2018 article written by CBC journalist Ms. Bethany Lindsay - Complaints leveled at B.C. naturopaths offering 'complete elimination' of autism. (<https://www.cbc.ca/amp/1.4675461>)

The CBC consistently reports on homeopathy in a manner that disregards their own stated commitment to act responsibly, to be accountable, and to strive for accuracy, fairness, balance, impartiality and integrity. This article is similar to many other articles by the CBC on homeopathy. The consistency in their manner of reporting indicates a more systemic problem at the CBC. The CBC persists in inviting the opinions of individuals who have no working knowledge, research knowledge, or expertise in the area of homeopathy.

Inviting Inexpert Opinions

Pat Mirenda is a professor of educational and counseling psychology and special education. My research on Ms. Mirenda provides no indication that Ms. Mirenda is knowledgeable or qualified to provide a professional opinion on the effectiveness of homeopathy. It appears that Ms. Mirenda's opinion that CEASE therapy is "*totally bogus*" or that "*None of that is true, none of that is evidence-based*" is not based on sound evidence-based research and is purely the opinion of a professor of educational and counseling psychology.

Similarly, Vancouver pediatrician Dr. Alisa Lipson appears to have no working knowledge or expertise in the field of homeopathy. By her own admission Dr. Lipson states "*she hasn't seen evidence that homeopathy works as a treatment for anything.*" Clearly, Dr. Lipson is uninformed on the use of homeopathy as a medical treatment in spite of homeopathy being a universally recognized and available form of medical treatment for more than two hundred years.

False Statements About Wakefield Study

A further example of inaccuracies, unfairness and poor journalistic standards is when Ms. Lindsay states – "*One of the main sources for the belief that vaccines cause autism is a 1998 study that has been discredited as "an elaborate fraud."*"

Ms. Lindsay is either woefully ignorant of the 1998 Wakefield study or is being intentionally dishonest in stating that the Lancet study has been discredited as “*an elaborate fraud*”. Ms. Lindsay’s statements are inaccurate, unfair, partial and irresponsible.

The findings of Dr. Wakefield and 12 other researchers in the 1998 Lancet paper were never ruled “an elaborate fraud” except by the media who regularly make this false and unsubstantiated claim. Dr. Wakefield was never charged with or found guilty of fraud.

Dr. Wakefield’s study examined the relationship between bowel disease and regressive developmental disorders. His findings have been replicated by dozens of independent 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 the case study of 12 patients proved vaccines cause autism; nor was this the intention of the case study. It is not possible for a case study to prove causality. To make the claim that Dr. Wakefield is one of the main sources for the belief that vaccines cause autism is not only inaccurate, it is profoundly distorted.

Had Ms. Lindsay actually read the Lancet paper she would have known that Dr. Wakefield’s own summary 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.*”

Ms. Lindsay also seems unaware that Dr. John Walker-Smith, the lead researcher in the 1998 Lancet case series, appealed the charges of the General Medical Council and was fully exonerated by the British High Court. These were the same charges leveled at Dr. Wakefield.

With regard to Dr. Wakefield and the Lancet study, I suggest Ms. Lindsay be encouraged to review:

- For the Discerning Journalist: 8 Wakefield Myths Deconstructed - Thinking Moms' Revolution
<http://thinkingmomsrevolution.com/discerning-journalist-8-wakefield-myths-deconstructed/>
- Dr. Andy Wakefield vs Brian Deer: The Real Fraud Revealed
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sh8yjUqzhNs>
- L'affaire Wakefield: Shades of Dreyfus & BMJ's Descent into Tabloid Science
<http://ahrp.org/laffaire-wakefield-shades-of-dreyfus-bmjs-descent-into->

[tabloid-science/](#)

With the amount of information publicly available about Dr. Wakefield and the 1998 Lancet case study, it is unacceptable for a journalist to make false, dishonest and discredited statements.

False Statements About Vaccine-Autism Link

With regard to a vaccine – autism link, there is a substantial and growing body of evidence of a vaccine – autism link. The body of evidence includes the following:

- A report in the [Pace Environmental Law Review Journal](#) 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 146 independent studies that show a relationship between vaccines and autism. <https://www.scribd.com/doc/220807175/146-Research-Papers-Supporting-the-Vaccine-Autism-Link>
- Dr. William Thompson, a Senior Scientist with the Vaccine Safety Division of the Center for Disease Control 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 that CDC scientists colluded to commit scientific fraud in order to obscure a link between the MMR vaccine and autism.

Dr. Thompson has stated that the CDC 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, including more than 5,000 pages of evidence. <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 that the CDC has acted fraudulently thereby putting our children at risk.

It is rather ironic that Ms. Lindsey accuses Dr. Wakefield of fraud when there is no evidence to substantiate such a claim, yet ignores the public disclosures of a senior CDC scientist who admits to fraud at the CDC and where there is a substantial body of evidence to support such a claim.

- 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](https://sharylattkisson.com/what-the-news-isnt-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.”*

- 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 dishonest and irresponsible and shows a disregard for science as well as morality.

Deborah Pugh, the executive director of ACT- Autism Community Training is woefully uninformed about the vaccine-autism link when she makes the claim that the vaccine-autism link is an “unsupported theory”. Clearly Ms. Pugh has not kept current with emerging scientific research that shows an undeniable relationship between brain inflammation due to vaccine ingredients and a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorders.

The scientific community has known for more than fifteen years that when a person is vaccinated, the brain’s own specialized immune cells, the microglia, become activated. Multiple vaccinations spaced close together over-stimulate the microglia, causing them to release a variety of toxic elements — cytokines, chemokines, excitotoxins, proteases, complement and free radicals that damage brain cells and their synaptic connections. Ms. Pugh would be advised to read:

<http://vaccinepapers.org/high-aluminum-content-autistic-brains/>

<http://vaccinepapers.org/wp-content/uploads/Autism-and-aluminum-adjuvants-in-vaccines.pdf>

<https://vaccinechoicecanada.com/wp-content/uploads/blaylock-vaccines-neurodevelopment-autism-spectrum-disorders-2008.pdf>

It is dishonest and irresponsible to claim there is no evidence of a vaccine-autism link. Anyone who makes this claim is either being intentionally dishonest or is uninformed and ought not to be providing their opinion on this critical topic.

Denial of Environmental Factor

The medical/pharmaceutical industry has been unrelenting in their efforts to deny an environmental component to autism spectrum disorders in spite of overwhelming scientific evidence. The medical industry initially identified autism as a psychiatric condition. Autism was blamed on “bad mothering”. When that theory failed to explain the dramatic increase in autism a genetic theory was proposed. Neither of these theories is adequate to explain the sudden, widespread, and epidemic increase in autism in the last three decades.

Autism has progressed from 1 in 10,000 prior to 1980 to 1 in 36 children in the US today. The latest Canadian statistics acknowledge autism at 1 in 66 children <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/autism-spectrum-disorder-children-youth-canada-2018.html>. These statistics, however, are incomplete as Ontario & some other provinces haven’t provided data.

Ms. Mirenda, who is a professor of special education, should be more aware than most of the dramatic increase in autism and other neurological and immunological disorders in children today. A genetic condition does not change this rapidly. Clearly an environmental factor is indicated. The failure of the medical industry and the media to acknowledge this fact does a significant disservice to every family affected by autism and undermines our confidence and trust in the medical industry and the mainstream media.

Attempt At Balance

While I appreciate that Ms. Lindsay made an attempt to solicit comments from the Naturopaths who are the subjects of the complaint, this effort appears disingenuous as it is unlikely any practitioner would make a public statement while the matter is still under investigation.

I also believe the reluctance of the homeopathy community to make public statements to the CBC is a reflection of the unbalanced, distorted and aggressively adversarial history of reporting by the CBC when the topic is homeopathy. The CBC is consistently negative and unfair in its reporting and shows no effort to understand homeopathy, provide the opinions of experts in homeopathy, or interview consumers who have benefited from homeopathic treatments.

Noticeably absent from the article was the perspective of consumers of the CEASE treatment program. As there is no evidence provided to indicate that consumers are discontent with the treatments provided under the CEASE program, it appears that the complaint was not initiated by discontented consumers. This begs the question - who, other than the pharmaceutical industry and its allies, is discontented with the treatment being provided to children with autism by Naturopaths? I wish the CBC journalist had investigated this aspect of the story. It appears that a well-orchestrated and organized attack on homeopathy is occurring worldwide and the

CBC is either wittingly or unwittingly complicit in this attack on our right to access alternative methods of treatment.

Were a promising method of treatment of autism proposed by the medical/pharmaceutical industry, would the CBC be as aggressive and as negative in their reporting as they are with non-pharmaceutical treatments? Or would the CBC become an enthusiastic cheerleader for this promising new method of treatment of autism?

It is blatantly unfair that the CBC is relentless in its support of treatments such as the influenza vaccine even though it has an acknowledged effectiveness of less than 15% most years, or the HPV vaccine, which is alleged to prevent cervical cancer even though there is not a single confirmed case of the HPV vaccine having done so. The obvious difference in reporting is an indication the CBC is not being fair, balanced, and impartial.

My concerns with the May 24th article are:

1. Clearly advocating for a particular point of view.

It is my understanding that the CBC is prohibited by federal regulation and corporate policy from supporting or advocating any point of view on controversial matters.

In this article CBC journalist Bethany Lindsay presented solely the point of view of those attempting to discredit the therapeutic value of the treatment of children with autism using homeopathy.

2. Failure to be fair, accurate, and balanced.

It is also my understanding the CBC is to make every effort to “be fair, accurate and balanced in the presentation of all stories”.

In this article there was only one point of view expressed. The author presented only one perspective – those interested in discrediting the treatment of autism using homeopathy. A fair and balanced article would have included one or more opinions arguing in support of the use of the CEASE program to treat autism.

Additionally the author would have selected more appropriate experts to provide comment on the effectiveness of homeopathy; experts sufficiently educated on the topic of homeopathic treatments to present accurate and honest information. This did not occur.

To interview a conventionally trained physician such as Dr. Alisa Lipson and invite her opinion on homeopathy is inappropriate. As a conventionally trained physician

Dr. Lipson would have no working knowledge, theory or training in alternative medical treatments such as homeopathy, and instead have a vested interest in discrediting a competing medical paradigm and denying the potential impact of vaccine triggered brain injuries that result in an autism diagnosis.

Would the CBC deem it fair, balanced and accurate to invite solely the opinions of a chiropractor, acupuncturist, or Naturopath on the merits of a pharmaceutical product? I suspect not. I also note that no effort was made by this journalist to acknowledge or disclose the conflicts of interest for Deborah Pugh, Dr. Alisa Lipson or Professor Pat Mirenda.

Not Intended to Inform

It would appear that Ms. Lindsay's reporting on the investigation of the claims of practitioners using the CEASE protocol was not intended to honestly and fairly inform the public on this matter. Instead the purpose of the report appears to be an effort to discredit homeopathy as a medical treatment and to entrain Canadians that the only form of healthcare they ought to consider valid is drug based pharmaceutical care.

It is my expectation that as Canada's national publicly supported broadcaster, the CBC would respect and protect our rights and freedoms as citizens, protect our independence and diversity, and offer investigative journalism that is accurate, fair, balanced and impartial. Canadians need an honest, responsible and independent fifth estate. My hope is the CBC would fulfill this role.

I believe a retraction and other efforts to restore fairness, accuracy and balance is in order. I look forward to your considered response.

Sincerely,

Ted Kuntz, Vancouver BC

cc.

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