



Dr. Manny: Stop Lying About the Autism-Vaccine 'Link'

By Dr. Manny Alvarez

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Further investigation into a 1998 study suggesting a link between childhood vaccines and autism, which was published in the medical journal Lancet and later retracted, revealed "an elaborate fraud" on the part of the lead author, Dr. Andrew Wakefield, and his colleagues. Click here for the full report.

When will the lies stop? Why not just say "we simply don't know enough yet?"

The level of frustration I feel every time one of these autism stories comes out just can't be described.

You have no idea what autism really is until you have a child with this disorder. Ever since my son Ryan was born, I have been feverishly searching for answers. And the numbers are staggering; one in 150 children have autism, so I suspect I'm just one of millions of parents doing the same.

Was it something that happened during his delivery? Was it some genetic defect? Was it some medication my wife took while she was pregnant?

My mind was flooded with questions, but what I realized as I tried to educate myself on everything I possibly could about autism, is that the best thing I could do would be prepare myself to wait for the answers. In the meantime, my goals became getting Ryan up to speed with the help of early intervention services, helping him with his motor skills and getting the whole family involved in the process.

Very early on, I followed the reports linking the toxicity of some vaccines to autism, and I tried to understand the metabolic pathways that were explained in the medical journals. I latched onto any semblance of logic that attempted to make sense of this puzzle that doctors were calling the "autism spectrum."

And even though some of those reports were anecdotal, and not based on large studies, I always wondered.

So when it came to my medical opinion, I've always taken a very conservative approach in telling parents that if they are fearful, they should space out their child's vaccination protocols, or try to find green vaccines, as I waited for better data to be produced confirming that vaccines could be the culprit.

But I have always been very bullish in impressing upon new parents that vaccinations are vital in preventing deadly diseases in our children, and keeping those that have been eradicated in this country from coming back.

I waited. Studies came out, but that hard data I was looking for never came to fruition. As a matter of fact, there was no link that could be identified.

There were reports of significant side effects in genetically-susceptible individuals, like Hannah Poling, of Athens, Ga. In 2008, the court ruled Hannah was entitled to compensation from a federal vaccine injury fund after determining she suffered from "rare, underlying metabolic condition that resulted in a brain disorder with features similar of autism spectrum disorder," which was aggravated by vaccines.



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Clearly, this case deals with an underlying health condition, and the statistical increase in autism rates shows no correlation with vaccination side effects. In fact, since Wakefield and his team first published their report in 1998, an international movement of parents deciding not to vaccinate their children has grown in popularity, with vocal supporters, including celebrities moms. But have the rates of autism dropped? No. They continue to grow, and in the meantime, we've seen the return of deadly diseases in unprotected children.

But still, a little part of me wondered.

Now, to find out that Dr. Wakefield's research was an "elaborate fraud," with alleged financial motives, hurts me more than anything.

In my opinion, scientific fraud is one of the most lethal crimes that any person can commit. I've said it before and I'll say it again. Doctors take an oath of "do no harm." And for a doctor to knowingly publish fraudulent "data" to support bogus claims for personal and professional gain is disgusting.

I feel angry, but more importantly I feel sad, not only for my Ryan, but for the millions children and their families that are still searching for answers.

I have no doubt that understanding autism and its roots will be identified in the near future. Hopefully, not by doctors like Wakefield, but by doctors who are really looking out for our children.

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