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## **An Autism Mom's Open Letter to Dr. Paul Offit**

By Julie Obradovic

Dear Dr. Offit,

I am writing in regard to your new book, Autism's False Prophets: Bad Science, Risky Medicine and Finding a Cure.

It would be premature to say for sure, but I am willing to bet I would be considered a "False Prophet" in your eyes. I am a mother who witnessed her daughter regress into Autism, and I am a mother who believes it was because of her vaccines. I dedicate much of my time to helping other parents who experienced the same thing with their own children.

I also make it a point to encourage parents to research vaccine safety carefully before blindly subjecting their children to it. In fact, I can count at least 10 children under the age of 3 right now who have been spared the one-size-fits-all approach to administering vaccines because of my advice. They are undoubtedly part of any decrease in vaccination rates.

Some critics call me an irresponsible anti-vaccine zealot for this. Frankly, I am baffled by that; I am simply advocating for more independent and relevant research into their safety and administration. I am also simply telling parents to do their homework; any decision they make not to vaccinate is theirs.

I have serious, unanswered questions about the current state of vaccination, and the bullying, fear-mongering, and hateful discourse spewed towards someone like myself does nothing to squelch my concerns, or more important, the concerns my family, friends and neighbors having children right now.

These people know that I am a rational, logical, courageous, highly educated, intelligent mother who pulled her own child out of the depths of Autism. They saw with their own eyes the descent of my perfectly healthy baby girl at birth until 6 months of age into the lost, sick state of Autism by age 2. It's not me telling them a version of what happened; they saw it for themselves.

They also saw us claw our way out of that hell-hole. They witnessed our family do what-ever it took for however long to get our little girl back. Despite the terrible odds against us, we got her. My daughter no longer qualifies as having Autism.

With 1 in 20 families now being affected by Autism, and thousands of those families recovering their children as we did, you can only imagine this trend (of parents not trusting you) growing. You continue to tell these family members, friends and neighbors that what they witnessed wasn't real. That doesn't sit well with most people I know, including you. If I'm not mistaken, the real reason for your book is because you don't like it when people call you a liar. It goes both ways.

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Instead of critics thanking me for preventing one more person from being dependent on the state for the rest of her life, thus saving them thousands of tax dollars in lifetime care, I am portrayed as an irresponsible parent who just couldn't accept that she is genetically flawed. Worse, I am now using my denial to hurt other children and society as a whole by scaring parents away from vaccinations.

For starters, I find it interesting that encouraging parents to research and question vaccines, including their ingredients and administrative protocol, is threatening. If there truly is nothing for parents to be

afraid of, then what is the problem with telling them to look into it for themselves? The idea that overwhelmingly the medical community would rather parents not question anything in this area, thereby "just trusting us", gives them reason to pause.

I trust my financial adviser, but I certainly won't let him do whatever he wants with my money before researching it first. And I trust my child's teacher, but that doesn't mean I don't participate in obtaining the learning outcomes desired for my child. Certainly you can understand that when it comes to a parent's baby, they are going to be involved in the decision making process of the most important thing that baby has her health.

Perhaps your resentment of educated parents stems from the fact that there are legitimate unanswered questions about vaccines that research foster like what is the safe amount of aluminum that can be injected into a tiny baby and how do you know that? (A biological study that has never been performed and a question that has never been answered.)

When a parent objects that you would subject their child to such an experiment, you are frustrated. Why? Because it appears to be safe for the general public, and that should be a good enough answer?

It would be a blatant lie to say these concerns are only fostered by desperate parents giving bad information and promoting bad science on the internet, but you perpetuate that myth none-the-less. It's easier to paint us as silly fools than to admit that you don't have all the answers. You probably find it shocking that of those 10 children I mentioned, 3 of them have parents who are physicians trained in evidence-based medicine. These are not stupid people.

As such, they can't help but be suspicious of someone like you who claims "I don't get paid to talk about vaccines" and "vaccines are the safest thing you can put in your body" knowing you just sold a patent for one worth \$182 million dollars (a vaccine that as one version had to be pulled because it actually killed some children).

They can't help but question you when they learn that millions of dollars have been paid out to people hurt by vaccines in a special "vaccine court" designed to protect vaccine manufacturers.

They can't help but wonder what you are talking about when they read the list of ingredients in a vaccine for themselves, or when they realize those ingredients have never been independently tested for safety.

They also can't help but wonder about your sanity when you crazily suggest a child could get 100,000 vaccines in one day, no problem. (Would 100,000 traces of thimerosal still be considered a trace?)

And they certainly can't help but wonder why someone so confident about his knowledge about what does not cause Autism has actually never treated someone with it.

Coupled with the fact that you refuse to debate any Autism specialists, journalists, parents or scientists in person, you end up being as credible as a used car salesman.

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In light of their research, and not just with regard to Autism, more and more parents are growing skeptical of vaccines for other reasons as well. Much of it is due to the current state of children's health in our country.

You don't have to have a child with Autism to know something is wrong: We have the most vaccinated children in the world, and the sickest. That may or may not be related, but it certainly warrants investigation. An epidemic of immune system dysfunction taking place in kids who are given more vaccines to provoke their immune systems at an earlier age than ever is disturbing, isn't it?

Right now, 1 in 5 children is in Special Education; allergies and asthma plague millions; diabetes and

other chronic diseases are at an all time high; speech delay, learning disabilities, ADHD, and occupational needs continue to soar; and certainly 1 in 64 boys being diagnosed with Autism is beyond comprehension.

In spite of these shameful statistics, medical authorities are doing their best to pretend this is all normal. They just can't figure out whether or not this is a problem (is it better diagnosis or not?), thereby continuing to deny calling this what it is: An epidemic.

We all know, however, that epidemics can never be genetic; something environmentally must be triggering the problem. This is becoming obvious enough that even the CDC is claiming to look for that trigger (which begs the question, why look for a trigger of an epidemic you claim doesn't exist?). It will add to the others that have also been conducted.

In one study, they found it could be the television causing Autism.

In another, they suggested dog shampoo could be doing it.

And now, as Dr. Harvey Karp mentioned on Larry King Live!, they are even looking into the flame retardant used in children's pajamas and their mattresses.

The sad thing about these studies is how truly insulting and wasteful they are. I have yet to meet or read about one parent of a child with Autism who says, "You know, I turned on the television one day, and wouldn't you know it, my baby got non-stop diarrhea everywhere!"

Or, "By golly, we washed the dog, and the next day, she stopped looking me in the eye!"

Or my favorite, "I put my child in new pajamas, and I swear he regressed right into Autism!"

Yet thousands upon thousands of parents all have the same story: They vaccinated their babies, and something happened chronic illnesses began, gastro-intestinal stress started, tantrums ensued, seizures took place and their sensory perception changed (among many other problems).

Still, the authorities refuse to make it a priority to look first and foremost at the chemicals INJECTED INTO THEIR BODIES as being the probable cause. No, instead, we're looking at their pajamas.

Could these stupid studies be necessary because actually finding the real trigger may be too frightening? As Dr. Bernadine Healy eloquently stated on the CBS Evening News, there is an expressed concern that finding that answer would jeopardize the vaccination program.

This means there are people in great positions of power who could investigate this issue thoroughly and instead have clearly stated, "We don't want to know if vaccines are causing Autism because the ramifications of that answer are too huge."

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I assume your response would be two-fold: One, that you think Dr. Healy is misinformed as you stated at the AAP Press Conference (it's interesting how everyone who disagrees with you is misinformed); and Two, that this question has been answered and re-answered: Vaccines have nothing do with it.

You will probably support this belief by referencing studies that supposedly exonerate not only vaccines, but their ingredients as well, from playing any part.

Unfortunately, I know from years of being involved in this debate that the average person doesn't have a clue about any of these studies. Instead, they hear a prominent physician like you referring to them on the nightly news or NPR and believe they must be true.

What they don't realize is that these studies in fact do very little to determine the role vaccines or their ingredients play in the Autism epidemic.

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To "prove" that vaccines don't cause Autism, physicians like you have compiled studies they believe put the issue to rest. Most of these studies are population in nature.

The paradigm supported by their compilation is that epidemiological studies would confirm if vaccines were indeed implicated in Autism; the fact that they repeatedly do not allows them to close the book on the subject. In other words, because they haven't found the association in the general population, the debate is over.

There are 4 major flaws with this.

### 1. Study Bias

These studies are done by the people who have the most to lose if the outcome is a bad one.

Your paradigm assumes that these compiled studies are independent studies that are not trying to generate a desired outcome.

I do not believe there is a conspiracy in the vaccines-causing-Autism controversy (a common tactic used to discredit my character). That would mean I believe from the very beginning, someone purposely set out to hurt my child. I do not.

But I am not naive either. It is appropriate to be skeptical of certain scientists' objectivity, especially when one considers the consequences of what their oversight may have caused (a foreign policy nightmare, lowered vaccination rates and a possible collapse of the vaccination program, law suits, billions in lost revenue, criminal charges). One needs only look at the tobacco industry as an example of the lengths people will go to protect themselves. This issue dwarfs tobacco.

Not only is there is high level conflict of interest on part of many of the authors, but in most instances, they are employees of vaccine manufacturers and/or work for the CDC (an organization responsible for keeping vaccination rates high). This clearly makes them biased.

As an example, consider the Taylor article published in the Lancet (1999). As a response to the Wakefield study (1998), this article attempts to exonerate the MMR from being involved with regressive Autism. The study was performed by several members of the UK Immunization Division of the Public Health Department. In the discussion of their study, they state:

"We hope that our results will reassure parents and others who have been concerned about the possibility that MMR is likely to cause Autism and that they will help to restore confidence in the MMR vaccine."

A good scientist doesn't set out to "reassure" anybody of anything with his or her hypothesis. They simply want to find the truth.

Only scientists who are truly independent can be trusted with this important research, which is why there is federal legislation currently pending for such action.

### 2. Poor Study Design

The methodology employed in these studies is not properly structured to test the hypothesis it is trying to.

You mention bad science as being a part of the problem in this debate; you even mention it in your book title. In this regard, we couldn't agree more. Over and over and over, studies that set out to test one hypothesis actually end up being irrelevant or inconclusive for finding it out if it's true, but get reported as conclusive none-the-less.

Consider these examples.

In 2002, Pinichero et al. performed a study to test for thimerosal safety. He reasoned that exposing children to typical thimerosal containing vaccinations and then collecting blood, stool and urine samples would verify its rapid excretion, thus proving its safety.

For starters, the study is limited to only 40 children; provided Autism affects 1 in 150 children, it is highly probable his sample size was too small. Regardless, the author could still only account for a small percentage of the mercury injected into the children. To explain this, he assumes the rest of it was excreted when he didn't catch it. However, thimerosal is now documented as entering tissue quickly, including the brain. Without a biopsy of these children's organs, it is impossible to know where all the mercury went.

Even more, he fails to explain why the two month old baby who received half the amount of thimerosal as the others had the highest percentage blood concentration of mercury. This would seem to fit the theory that not all children have the same detoxification abilities, but this fact is ignored.

None-the-less, this study is widely quoted as proving thimerosal is safe.

Another example of this problem, and perhaps the most important of them all, is the CDC population study conducted in the United States on the role of thimerosal exposure in the development of Autism and other developmental disorders.

Of primary concern, the CDC should have never been allowed to conduct this study in the first place. In perhaps the first instance of its kind, the CDC was investigating a health outcome that they may have caused.

People accused of a crime do not have the luxury of investigating themselves to find out if indeed they are guilty. From the get-go, ethical and responsible researchers should have identified this conflict and given the task to someone on the outside. They did not.

Even after being redone 4 times before publication, noting the correlation "just won't go away", the study could still only report finding a "neutral" association between the two.

This neutral association was present in spite of the fact that a child's cumulative exposure to thimerosal was not accurately tabulated. Flu shots, Rhogam shots given to their mothers while pregnant, and other thimerosal containing vaccines were eliminated from being used to tabulate their total exposure. (Which is odd, isn't it? If you want to see if it's having an effect, why not include all of it?)

And now, the original data sets have been lost, destroyed (both punishable as a Federal crime) or stored in off-shore accounts where they cannot be accessed for replication.

Interestingly, Dr. Julie Gerberding, Head of the CDC, recently declared the study "useless" and not helpful in ruling out an association between the two.

Provided this study was a large part of the Institute of Medicine's 2004 ruling that thimerosal did not play a causal role in the development of Autism, and no longer warranted further study, it is fair to say that their ruling no longer stands. A "useless" study can certainly not support such a position.

The list of examples I could site with this kind of methodology flaw used to exonerate vaccines or their

components goes on and on. In fact, there is not one study in your compilation that isn't subject to this scrutiny, including the recently released study on the MMR.

Because of this, I'm thinking about writing a book too. I'm going to call it, Autism's False Offits: Biased Science, An absence of Medicine, and No Attempt to Find a Cure.

### 3. Irrelevant Findings

The studies used to exonerate vaccines from causing Autism are extremely focused, although the question is a broad based one that hasn't been sufficiently addressed.

Once again, the theory behind vaccines triggering Autism is that there is a genetically susceptible group of individuals who upon exposure to vaccination regress into Autism.

To properly test this theory, multiple studies have yet to be conducted. A study of the never vaccinated versus the vaccinated would help determine if vaccines were indeed implicated, but not necessarily explain why. Additional study of the children with these health impairments is prudent. They need to be tested for vaccine strain viruses that may have not properly cleared the body and/or left behind damage (immediately following regression preferably); they need to be tested for heavy metal toxicity, which may have sparked the problem to begin with; and they need to be tested for any and all evidence that may demonstrate how all of these issues are related.

But we don't have these studies yet. Instead, what we have are studies that have suggested, not proved, that thimerosal ALONE does not cause Autism in the general population (no longer admissible) and current studies that suggest the MMR ALONE does not either.

Claiming the debate over whether or not vaccines are involved in Autism based on this is irresponsible. We don't have a study on the effect of the combination of the two, or on all of the other vaccines given in combination. Considering there are now dozens of routine childhood vaccines, the causal possibilities are numerous.

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None-the-less, let's assume that all of that science is actually perfect. Let's assume that none of the authors, whether or not they are vaccine patent holders like you, or employees of vaccination companies, or members of the CDC are unethical in any capacity. Let's say that each and every individual conducting these studies has the highest professional standards and would not compromise something so important in any capacity. And let's assume that all of the studies were designed and methodically carried out to the tee.

They still don't prove Autism isn't caused by vaccines.

### 4. Epidemiology can never prove causation.

While population studies are useful for identifying large-scale problems, they are not useful in identifying genetic susceptibilities, and again, can never stand alone in proving something did or did not happen in an individual.

Suppose I have a grove of multiple kinds of fruit trees, and every time I spray the grove with pesticide, my orange trees get sick but none of the other trees do. If I study the entire grove over and over again and don't come up with an association between the pesticide and the sick orange trees, I still can't rule out that it was the pesticide that did it to them.

That doesn't mean my study of the fruit trees was wrong, and it doesn't mean the pesticide is bad for all the trees; it just means my study was irrelevant to the question at hand. At best I know most of my fruit trees are fine when exposed to this chemical. It doesn't change the fact something's still wrong

when my oranges are, or that I still don't know why.

Provided none of the Autism studies touted exclusively studies the children who did regress after their vaccines, it is baffling that medical professionals are so willing to claim the issue is closed for debate.

Ethical and compassionate physicians would make it a priority to say, "Although I don't understand why this is happening to these children, and although some studies are telling me it didn't happen to the general population of children (Thank God!), I have an obligation to find out why it did to this child. Why did this child regress after his vaccines, and what evidence does he show me that it was or wasn't causal?"

This is a substantially different take from saying "Population studies told me it didn't happen, therefore it didn't. Case closed."

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Those physicians who do feel obligated to look beyond epidemiology are conducting such research. Together they and scientists from prestigious universities like Harvard and Columbia have compiled significant scientific evidence demonstrating that indeed vaccines may be involved.

Evidence

#### 1. Anecdotal

Hundreds of thousands of parents globally all have the same story: They vaccinated their children and something happened. In some instances, the something happened immediately. In others, it happened slowly over time and got worse with each series of vaccines. Regardless, they all subscribe to the same story. They witnessed their children's health deteriorate after vaccines, and subsequently their children were diagnosed with Autism.

While this is not conclusive as being causal, it certainly is valid. Anecdotal evidence is revered as being scientific and the fact that so many parents are telling the same story should raise red flags everywhere. Instead, parents are irresponsibly dismissed as imagining it or remembering things inaccurately.

Furthermore, the timing of the onset of Autism and vaccines is identical. This too makes it highly plausible they are involved.

#### 2. Epidemiological

Multiple studies done, including those sponsored by the CDC, prove that there has been a substantial increase in Autism and other developmental disorders in the last 2 decades. This increase starts precisely when the Hepatitis B shot was administered at birth, beginning in the late 1980's.

Many doctors have written this increase off as an indication of better diagnosis. However, the better diagnosis belief would mean that about 97% of cases of Autism in 1985 and prior were missed. In other words, 1 in 64 40 year old males is walking around right now with Autism and doesn't know it.

Finally, no wide-scale study has been done on the vaccinated versus never vaccinated children of this country (a study that also has legislation behind it). It is absolutely impossible to know the true differences in health outcomes between them. In this case, it is a lack of epidemiology that is hurting our kids.

#### 3. Biological

Incredibly, the symptoms of mercury poisoning and Autism are identical. They aren't kind of similar, or sort of the same, they are identical. The idea that we are actually debating whether or not injecting kids with mercury can cause the symptoms of mercury is ridiculous.

I've included a table in case you are one of those ignorant physicians often quoted who only know mercury toxicity in the form of Acrodynia or Minimata Disease and fail to understand the other ways it may manifest. There is no doubt the comparison of mercury toxicity to Autism is stunning.

\*Borrowed from Changing the Course of Autism (Jepsen)

#### Mercury Toxicity Autism

##### Biochemistry Biochemistry

Binds SH groups; blocks sulfate transporter in intestines and kidneys  
Reduces glutathione availability, inhibits enzymes of glutathione metabolism; glutathione needed in neurons, cells, and liver to detoxify heavy metals; reduces glutathione peroxidase and reductase  
Disrupts purine and pyrimidine metabolism  
Disrupts mitochondrial activities, especially in the brain ∅ Low sulfate levels  
Low levels of glutathione; decreased ability of liver to detoxify xenobiotics; abnormal glutathione peroxidase activity in erythrocytes

Purine and pyrimidine metabolism errors lead to autistic features

Mitochondrial dysfunction, especially in the brain

##### Immune System Immune System

Sensitive individuals more likely to have allergies, asthma, autoimmune-like symptoms, especially rheumatoid-like ones  
Can produce an immune response in CNS, causes brain/MBP autoantibodies  
Causes overproduction of Th2 subset; kills/inhibits lymphocytes, T-cells, and monocytes; decreases NK T-cell activity; induces or suppresses IGM & IL-2

More likely to have allergies and asthma;

familial presence of autoimmune diseases, especially rheumatoid arthritis; IgA deficiencies

On-going immune response in CNS; brain/MBP autoantibodies present  
Skewed immune-cell subset in the Th2 direction; decreased response to T-cells mitogens; reduced NK T0cell function; increased IFNg & IL-12

##### CNS (Central Nervous System) structure CNS Structure

Selectively targets brain areas unable to detoxify or reduce Hg-induced oxidative stress

Accumulates in amygdale, hippocampus, basal ganglia, cerebral cortex; damages Purkinje and granule cells in cerebellum; brain stem defects in some cases

Causes abnormal neuroanatomical cytoarchitecture; disrupts neuronal migration, microtubules, and cell division; reduces NCAMs

Progressive microcephaly ∅ Specific areas of brain pathology; many functions spared (area 36)

Pathology in amygdale, hippocampus, basal ganglia, cerebral brain stem defects in some cases

Neuronal disorganization; increased neuronal cell replication, increased glial cells; depressed expression of NCAMs

Progressive microcephaly and macrocephaly

## Neuro-chemistry Neuro-chemistry

Prevents presynaptic serotonin release and inhibits serotonin transport; causes calcium disruptions

Alters dopamine systems; peroxidase deficiency in rats resembles mercurialism in humans

Elevates epinephrine and norepinephrine levels by blocking enzyme that degrades epinephrine

Elevates glutamate

Leads to cortical acetylcholine deficiency; increases muscarinic receptor density in hippocampus and cerebellum

Causes demyelinating neuropathy ≠ Decreased serotonin synthesis in children; abnormal calcium metabolism

Either high or low dopamine levels; positive response to peroxidase, which lowers dopamine levels

Elevated norepinephrine and epinephrine

Elevated glutamate and aspartate

Cortical acetylcholine deficiency; reduced muscarinic receptor binding in hippocampus

Demyelination in brain

## Neurophysiology Neurophysiology

Causes abnormal EEGs, epileptiform activity, variable patterns, e.g., subtle, low amplitude seizure activities

Causes abnormal vestibular nystagmus responses; loss of sense of position in space

Results in autonomic disturbance: excessive sweating, poor circulation, elevated heart rate ≠ Abnormal EEGs, epileptiform activity, variable patterns, including subtle, low amplitude seizure activities

Abnormal vestibular nystagmus responses; loss of sense of position in space

Autonomic disturbance: unusual sweating, poor circulation, elevated heart rate

## Psychiatric Disturbances Psychiatric Disturbances

Social deficits, shyness social withdrawal

Repetitive, preservative, stereotypic behaviors; obsessive-compulsive tendencies

Depression/depressive traits, mood swings, flat affect; impaired face recognition

Anxiety; schizoid tendencies; irrational fears

Irritability, aggression, temper-tantrums

Lacks eye contact; impaired visual fixation, problems in joint attention Social deficits, shyness social withdrawal

Repetitive, preservative, stereotypic behaviors; obsessive-compulsive tendencies

Depression/depressive traits, mood swings, flat affect; impaired face recognition

Anxiety; schizoid tendencies; irrational fears

Irritability, aggression, temper-tantrums

Lacks eye contact; impaired visual fixation, problems in joint attention

## Speech and Language Deficits Speech and Language Deficits

Loss of speech, delayed language, failure to develop speech

Dysarthria; articulation problems

Speech comprehension deficits

Verbalizing and word retrieval problems; echolalia, word use and pragmatic errors ≠ Loss of speech, delayed language, failure to

develop speech

Dysarthria; articulation problems

Speech comprehension deficits

Verbalizing and word retrieval problems; echolalia, word use and pragmatic errors

Sensory Abnormalities Sensory Abnormalities

Abnormal sensation in mouth and extremities

Sound sensitivity; mild to profound hearing loss

Abnormal touch sensations; touch aversion

Over-sensitivity to light; blurred vision, loss of color perception

Under-sensitive or over-sensitive to pain Abnormal sensation in mouth and extremities

Sound sensitivity; mild to profound hearing loss

Abnormal touch sensations; touch aversion

Over-sensitivity to light; blurred vision

Under-sensitive or over-sensitive to pain

Motor Disorders Motor Disorders

Flapping, myoclonal jerks, choreiform movements, circling, rocking, toe walking, unusual postures

Deficits in eye-hand coordination; limb apraxia; intention tremors, problems with intentional movement or imitation

Abnormal gait and posture, clumsiness and incoordination; difficulties sitting, lying, crawling, and walking; problem on one side of body Flapping, myoclonal jerks, choreiform movements, circling, rocking, toe walking, unusual postures

Deficits in eye-hand coordination; limb apraxia; intention tremors, problems with intentional movement or imitation

Abnormal gait and posture, clumsiness and incoordination; difficulties sitting, lying, crawling, and walking; problem on one side of body

Cognitive Impairments Cognitive Impairments

Borderline intelligence, mental retardation-some cases reversible

Poor concentration, attention, response inhibition

Poor visual and perceptual motor skills; impairment in simple reaction time

Deficits in understanding abstract ideas & symbolism; degeneration of higher mental powers, sequencing, planning and organization

Borderline intelligence, mental retardation-some cases reversible

Poor concentration, shifting attention

Poor visual and perceptual motor skills; impairment in simple reaction time lower performance on timed tests

Difficulty in carrying out complex commands

Deficits in understanding abstract ideas & symbolism; degeneration of higher mental powers, sequencing planning and organizing

Unusual Behaviors Unusual Behaviors

Self-injurious behavior, head banging

Inability to focus or concentrate; hyperactivity

Agitation, unprovoked crying, grimacing and staring spells

Sleep disturbances and impairments

Self-stimulatory behaviors

Obsessive compulsive behaviors

ADHD traits

Agitation, unprovoked crying, grimacing and staring spells

Sleep disturbances and impairments

Self-stimulatory behaviors

Obsessive compulsive behaviors

Physical Disturbances Physical Disturbances

Hyper or hypotonia; abnormal reflexes; decreased muscle strength; especially upper body; incontinence; problems chewing and swallowing

Rashes, dermatitis, eczema, itching

Peeling skin (hands and feet)

Diarrhea; abdominal pain/discomfort, constipation, colitis

Anorexia, nausea, vomiting; poor appetite, restricted diet

Lesions of ileum and colon; increased gut permeability ∅ Hyper or hypotonia; abnormal reflexes; decreased muscle strength; especially upper body; incontinence; problems chewing and swallowing

Rashes, dermatitis, eczema, itching

Diarrhea; abdominal pain/discomfort, constipation, colitis

Anorexia, nausea, vomiting; poor appetite, restricted diet

Lesions of ileum and colon; increased gut permeability

It is impossible for a parent like myself, who witnessed her daughter regress into Autism more and more with each set of vaccines she received, to believe that it is a coincidence that she was repeatedly injected with mercury (including at birth), and then developed the symptoms of mercury poisoning.

This is the equivalent of someone saying that they went into the sun for 2 hours on a sunny day and got the symptoms of a sun burn, but the sun didn't do it because everybody else they know always gets a tan, (and they better not treat themselves or tell anyone what happened because the sun is good). It is completely and totally illogical to believe such a thing.

Further evidence to support a toxicological base in Autism comes from studies that demonstrate higher rates of Autism among children who live near coal-burning plants; a study that demonstrates glutathione levels (a substance necessary for detoxification) being 68% lower in children with Autism than their neurotypical peers; and a study on mice with a predisposition for auto-immune conditions that shows a markedly different response to thimerosal exposure than the mice who did not.

Then there are the studies that show thimerosal causes mitochondrial dysfunction, the exact same condition the Dept. of Health and Human Services (in a medical decision, not a legal one) just said caused Hannah Poling's symptoms of Autism after receiving 9 vaccines at once.

Not to mention, the very first cases of Autism ever diagnosed in the world or anywhere in medical literature were done shortly after thimerosal was introduced on the market. Among those cases, many of them had parents who worked with or lived near ethyl mercury, the same kind of mercury used in thimerosal.

In fact, there is so much evidence against thimerosal that an entire book was written on it by an award-winning journalist in 2005: Evidence of Harm, by David Kirby.

At a minimum, this evidence substantiates ruling out mercury toxicity in all children with Autism. That was my purpose when finding a qualified specialist to test my daughter.

Why wouldn't I rule it out as a possibility? Because one flawed epidemiological study done by those who would be held accountable told me maybe it happened, maybe it didn't? Because vaccines save lives and questioning them is wrong? How irrelevant! How irresponsible! My daughter was injected with mercury and subsequently developed the symptoms of what it causes! How could I not test her?

Naturally, when it was confirmed she was mercury toxic, I was outraged. Well first, I actually vomited.

I don't believe anyone tried to poison my daughter, but they did. As a result, her entire life and what she

will be able to do with it has been permanently altered.

More urgent, she needed to be treated. Under a doctor's care, using only medication approved for mercury poisoning, she was.

Today, I'm thrilled to report; she no longer has mercury poisoning or Autism.

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Dr. Offit, time limits my ability in this letter to list each and every study that supports evidence that children with Autism have substantial health problems, including but not limited to their immune system, their central nervous system, and their gastro-intestinal system. They have severe nutritional deficiencies; tolerate horrific yeast overgrowth in their guts coupled with leaky gut syndrome and dysbiosis; are in a constant state of battling viruses and infection; have lowered detoxification capabilities and suffer from heavy metal toxicity; and live daily with intense pain, inflammation, and sensory issues.

All of these health issues are well-documented in the medical literature. All a responsible physician has to do is look.

But instead, they are told not to because according to physicians like you, all of it is garbage. Somehow only the studies done by those who have the most to lose, the CDC, the AAP, and the vaccine manufacturing companies, are actually quality.

According to your (and their) logic:

It's a coincidence that Autism didn't appear in the medical literature until right after thimerosal came on the market. (It's been around for centuries, we just never bothered to document it.)

It's a coincidence the symptoms of Autism and mercury poisoning are the same. (Sometimes these things happen.)

It's a coincidence that as children are being treated for their medical problems they are losing their diagnosis. (It's both a lifelong genetic condition and something people spontaneously recover from.)

It's a coincidence that these children are regressing into Autism at the same time they are getting their vaccines. (Unfortunate timing.)

It's a coincidence that four times as many boys have Autism than girls, even though we know mercury is synergistic with testosterone. (Mercury has nothing to do with Autism.)

It's a coincidence that the rate of Autism and other developmental disorders has sky-rocketed as we added more vaccines to the schedule. (We have gotten better at diagnosing, that's all.)

It's a coincidence parent after parent has the same story. They vaccinated and their child shortly developed Autism thereafter. (It's the internet's fault.)

At the same time, you perpetuate the myth that thimerosal is a safe substance and that it is no longer in vaccines; you even state that in trace amounts it is the equivalent of being exposed to the mercury that we breathe or eat. I certainly hope I am misunderstanding that you believe breathing or eating a substance is the same as having it injected into your body. They most certainly are not.

We both know that if you ever tried to convince a parent that injecting their child with just a little bit of lead, simply because lead is in a pencil they use or in the food they eat, the parent would run fast and far away from you. Yet mercury is 500 times more toxic.

Additionally, you know that thimerosal has never been tested for safety. It is labeled as poison and the bottle clearly states that exposure may result in neurological harm. It is so toxic that it was banned from over-the-counter products in 1982 and from animal vaccines in 1991. It's so toxic that when put on the umbilical cords of 7 babies in a hospital in 1977, they all died.

Still, it inexplicably remains in human vaccines to this day. Despite claims to the contrary, it was never "removed". To date, no one has verified that indeed it is no longer on the shelves of doctor's everywhere. At best, it is only in smaller amounts, not zero amounts. Even worse, it is now recommended that all pregnant women and children get a flu shot, which has the full dose of 25 micrograms in it (unless they know to ask otherwise).

Considering the argument has always been there is a genetic susceptibility to this substance, it is irresponsible to claim that less of it would automatically be less dangerous to such a person. A person with a peanut allergy only needs 1 peanut to go into anaphylactic shock, not a bowl full, and sometimes less than that.

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By continuing to promote to this coincidental and toxicological non-sense, you are denying the right to medical care for millions across the globe, a human right's violation.

Our children are perhaps the sickest children on the planet, and yet they are shamefully not given medical care. Instead, they are told to go home with their parents where they should get behavioral therapy alone, and worse, look into an institution. They are written off from society as being hopeless causes and a burden to their families.

This is the equivalent of a parent whose child has cancer being told to just forget about treating them and go buy a burial plot.

In an even crueler twist of fate, our children can't tell us what is wrong or where it hurts because their ability to speak has been taken from them. To communicate sometimes, they scream and hurt themselves and throw tantrums. They have chronic gastro-intestinal distress and unimaginable pain; are overly sensitive to everything; often can't ever get a good night's sleep; and sometimes can't even tolerate being touched as their parents try to comfort them. All the while they are expected to learn or behave properly. Can you imagine their hell?

And now parents are being told by ignorant members of society that their precious kids are simply brats who don't know how to behave in public. Supposedly they are just putting on act because their fathers have disappeared or their mom doesn't know how to discipline. I suppose if I weren't an insider I would tell myself that too; the idea that this is real is enough to scare anyone into rationalizing it away.

Make no mistake, the torture of watching your child succumb to this disease and being told that there's nothing you can or should do; well frankly, it is enough to drive some people over the edge. It should not be surprising parents of children with Autism are killing themselves and their children, jumping with them off bridges, drowning them, and suffocating them.

It doesn't get any more real than that.

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Dr. Offit, there is a generation of children who are on fire right now. Their health is in flames, and rather than doing everything in your power to put them out, you have chosen to debate about whether or not there really is a fire; if and how it started; and whether or not there is any real reason to put them out.

Worse, you have taken it upon yourself to ridicule and criticize those of us parents who have decided to douse our children in water, despite your inaction. You criticize the kind of water we are using, where we are getting it from, how much we are using, who is helping us get it, and have the audacity to suggest that us attempting to put out the flames is more irresponsible than letting them burn.

In an even more despicable twist, you go so far as to accuse us of actually wanting and causing other children to get hurt because we warn parents about how our fire started; it's easier to blame us rather than acknowledge your pitiful display of incompetence as being the real reason for the spark. How dare you.

I love my children more than anything in the world. I also love the children of my family members, my neighbors, and my friends. I would lie down in traffic for any one of them if that's what it took to save their life. For anyone to suggest that I would recklessly put their lives or other people's children at risk because I encourage them to research vaccine safety is pouring salt on a gaping wound.

The pain I feel about what happened to my middle child is often times intolerable, and I'm one of the lucky ones. I got her back. There isn't a day that goes by that I don't wish I didn't believe vaccines hurt her. I've lost faith in my government, my media, and my medical institution (but am hopeful it can be restored). To top it off, I am subjected to the vile of anonymous bullies and threatened physicians who are angry that my experience differs from what they think it should have.

The saddest thing is we're both on the same side. We both want children to be protected, except I believe we can and have to do better. To be sure though, I would not wish what happened to my daughter on my worst enemy, even them.

Can you imagine what it feels like to hold your child down to be poisoned at the hands of people you trusted; to watch her suffer in silence unable to communicate her pain and fear; to confirm she was poisoned after wasting years of time; and to live with the never-ending pain of not knowing what irreparable damage was caused or who she was meant to be. Only to be told that what you lived wasn't real; that trying to help her is irresponsible; and that by speaking out about it and trying to prevent it from happening to another child you are recklessly putting society at risk?

Let's get something straight: my daughter is the victim here, not the medical community. And as for society, our debt has been paid a thousand fold.

When I followed the rules. When I listened to the advice of my doctors and showed up at their doorstep exactly on the day my baby was scheduled to receive her shots, something horrible happened.

I don't know why it happened to my daughter and not my son. I don't know why it happens to some children and not others. I don't have those answers, Dr. Offit, but I do know this: It happened.

I'm sorry that makes you defensive. I'm sorry you have chosen to take it personally rather than admit you don't have all the answers. I'm sorry you cannot acknowledge the existing studies have their limitations and that you, being a vaccine patent holder are probably not the best person to be promoting or dictating your version of vaccine safety.

But I am not sorry that I have chosen to speak out about it. I am not sorry that those 10 children I mentioned earlier, including my own, will no longer be subjected to blindly following along a path that so many have for so long. I am not sorry that parents everywhere are beginning to think for themselves and are demanding answers.

And I absolutely will not apologize that I have the courage to stand up and ask you if in the name of good we have inadvertently swapped infectious disease for chronic disease. No responsible person wants a resurgence of vaccine preventable diseases, but no responsible person wants chronic disease to be the cost of preventing them, especially if it is our children who are making that payment.

We have been vaccinating human beings for decades now, and we have yet to take a step back and look at any unintended consequences we may have caused. We have a responsibility to humanity to study that possibility, no matter how unpleasant the answer may be.

And no, despite your claim to the contrary, we haven't.

Sincerely,  
Julie Obradovic

Julie Obradovic is the mom of a recovered child.