

**Jonathon Holmes's Mediawatch program: 'Measles False Balance Exposed' (October 2012) is an exercise in propaganda.**

This episode of Mediawatch was about the integrity of TV programs in presenting both sides of a scientific issue. In this mediawatch episode Jonathon Holmes criticises the Illawarra's Win TV for presenting both sides of the vaccination debate. Investigative journalists are required to present both sides of scientific issues yet Jonathon Holmes was supported by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) when he criticised Win TV for doing this.

Win TV was presenting a story about measles and it mentioned the possible link between MMR vaccine and autism. Whilst many doctors and medical associations are claiming that the link between the MMR vaccine and autism has been discredited there are many consumers and doctors who believe there is a possible causal link between the use of multiple vaccines (not just the MMR vaccine) and autism, and the correct scientific studies have not been done to disprove this link.

Jonathon Holmes, who is not an expert in this field, informed the public that there was a consensus among doctors and scientists about the discrediting of this link. There is no consensus on this science because all stakeholders have not been involved in assessing the science: doctors and scientists are divided on this issue.

Jonathon Holmes asserts in this program that consumers, a major stakeholder in vaccines, are not entitled to present the science that questions the safety and efficacy of vaccines. He suggests that including consumers in the vaccination debate represents 'false balance' and he states that the scientific arguments presented by consumers are just 'bullshit' and 'baloney'. This may be Jonathon Holmes's opinion but he should not be trying to influence public opinion with his unscientific arguments. This is not the job of an investigative journalist.

If Jonathon Holmes had properly investigated both sides of the debate he would have found

there are many doctors who are questioning the safety of multiple vaccines in infants. Some of these doctors have formed the International Medical Council on Vaccination (IMCV) and they have a website at the following link [www.vaccinationcouncil.org/about/](http://www.vaccinationcouncil.org/about/)

Jonathon Holmes, and other journalists, are presenting misinformation and hindering public debate when they select the science that they will present to the public. Consumers are a major stakeholder in vaccines and they have a right to present the scientific arguments that support their perspective on the risks of vaccines. These scientific arguments are equally valid to other stakeholders in the issue – industry, doctors, and governments. Balanced scientific debates ensure that all stakeholders can discuss the scientific evidence that is used in policy-decisions made by governments.

Channel 10's the Project has adopted a similar position. It states 'We are not obliged to provide equal time and space to unscientific and dangerous viewpoints'. Nobody is expecting Channel 10 to provide space to 'unscientific' viewpoints, they are being expected to abide by the journalistic code and report on "all" the science in a scientific debate. The media is providing misinformation to the public on a very important health issue and this is dangerous to population health.

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[www.vaccinationdecisions.net](http://www.vaccinationdecisions.net)