

## Newsletter 17 Media Presentation of the Vaccination Debate

12 April 2013

Recently the media has saturated the public with pro-vaccination arguments presented by individuals who do not have expertise in public health policy or knowledge of vaccination science. This was recently observed on Channel 7's Sunrise program that was presented on the 11 April 2013. In this segment Kochie states that the official 'statistics show that the lowest vaccination rates are in the wealthy suburbs'. This has been confirmed by both Professor Fiona Stanley and Professor Peter McIntyre director of the government surveillance unit for infectious diseases. And of course the wealthy suburbs are home to many doctors, specialists and other educated professionals.

So why did Sunrise not represent the opposite side of the debate with a 'wealthy educated professional' who is representative of this demographic that is now the highest non-vaccinating segment of the population?

The panel consisted of 3 women – 2 representing the pro-vaccination position, Caroline Marcus (a Daily Telegraph Reporter) and Kylie Gillies, and one representing an anti-vaccination position, Sarah Wilson – *even though it wasn't her opinion*. The pro-vaccination women (Caroline and Kylie) suggested that wealthy people are not vaccinating because 'they go away on so many holidays and they are also very busy getting their roots done at the hair dressers'. In other words, these *educated* people are not making vaccination a priority and this program did not bother to find out why.

When Sarah Wilson disagreed that it was 'because they were too busy' she was shot down with the unsupported opinions of Kochie, Kylie and Caroline. According to these panellists the fact that wealthy people are educated and more aware of the benefits and risks of vaccines is irrelevant to their decision not to vaccinate their children. In the past public health authorities have stated that it is 'the uneducated people that are not vaccinating' and Professor Fiona Stanley has stated that the single most important factor in the health of children is the *mother's* education.

The other false information that has been presented by News limited reporters recently includes (see link below):

1. Immunisation alone is responsible for the eradication in the developed world of smallpox and polio.
2. Not having your kids vaccinated leads to the death of children and babies (There are many cases of vaccines being associated with causing death and disability)
3. Anyone who questions vaccines is a 'nutter'
4. Vaccines do not cause autism. This statement is being made by the media even though scientists do not agree on this issue and the correct studies have not been done to debunk this theory. Children in the US who have developed autism after vaccination have been awarded compensation for their injuries.
5. The media is informing the Public that Andrew Wakefield has been discredited even though a movie was made (10 years ago) showing how the authorities discredited his research because his team at the Royal Free Hospital in London suggested more safety studies should be done on the MMR vaccine before it is considered safe for the population. [Dr. Wakefield Film 'Hear the Silence' Resurfaces After 10 Years](#)

The media and government would like the public to believe that there is no 'other side to this issue' and this is stated by Caroline Marcus in her News Limited article. In scientific issues there is always debate over the science and the media is preventing this debate from happening by constantly portraying this side of the argument as *anti-vaccination* instead of examining the science demonstrating the risk of vaccines and allowing choice in the use of this medical procedure.

This issue is particularly important because the Australian Government would like to follow the US lead and implement a policy that requires all children to be vaccinated with multiple vaccines (currently 11) before they are allowed to attend School. This is despite the fact that the majority of these vaccines have been introduced after the diseases became a very low risk to Australian children which indicates the vaccines did not control these diseases

<http://vaccinationdecisions.net/immunisation-policy/>

If you agree that individuals have the fundamental right to control the medications they use in their bodies, particularly preventative medical procedures in healthy individuals, please sign the petition below because the media has not informed the public that this right is not

currently protected in Australia. Whilst there are currently no regulations in the health acts compelling any Australian to use a vaccine (vaccination in Australia **is not** compulsory) many institutions have implemented regulations that compel the public to use vaccines to maintain their livelihood or to enter Australia.

There are many community members who are advocating for a clause to be added to the current draft Human Rights Bill to prevent the government from dictating what substances are injected into healthy children and adults in Australia. Here is a link to the petition to support this position

[http://www.avaaz.org/en/petition/My\\_Body\\_My\\_Choice/?cDZEidb](http://www.avaaz.org/en/petition/My_Body_My_Choice/?cDZEidb)

Please pass this information on and get involved in the debate because only the public can defend the public interest in government policy. Here is the link to the recent News Limited articles presenting misinformation on vaccination

<http://www.news.com.au/opinion/sarah-wilsons-apparent-support-of-the-anti-vax-movement-irresponsible-writes-caroline-marcus/story-fnh4jt54-1226618512433>

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