
LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Comment on Dr. Joel A. Harrison's "Wrong About Vaccine Safety"

Joel A. Harrison, PhD. MPH.

Wrong About Vaccine Safety: A Review of Andrew Wakefield's "Callous Disregard"

The Open Vaccine Journal, 2013, 6, 9-25.

DEAR EDITOR

I have been working at the Swedish Institute for Infectious Disease Control, Karolinska Hospital, Stockholm and as Senior Medical Officer in the Department of Communicable Disease and Prevention in Stockholm County and after retiring I worked in the Department of Communicable Disease Control and Prevention, Uppsala University Hospital. My medical research, besides epidemiological measures, has had a major focus on vaccines, their effectiveness, safety, and implementation. I recently read Dr Harrison's paper in this journal. I was amazed that Dr Wakefield, in both a 2000 article and in his book, claimed I told him that we in Sweden did not concern ourselves with vaccine safety nor were aware of anyone else who did so. During my career I communicated with many people but I do not recall any contact with Dr Wakefield. Actually, I have never heard his name before. However, what Dr Wakefield wrote could not possibly be true as we in Sweden are very aware of the possibility of side effects to vaccinations. It is obligatory for all

physicians and other medical personal to report all kinds of side effects of vaccinations to the National Board of Health and Welfare in Stockholm. Of course, if someone inquired about our vaccine program I would have informed them that follow-up antibody titers were carried out as one measure of effectiveness, not safety, but I would also have emphasized how important vaccine safety is and, certainly, would not have said I was unaware of other safety studies. The three articles on Swedish vaccines that Dr Harrison refers to in his article, two of which I co-authored, plus many other articles from Sweden document that vaccine safety is our primary concern. I am grateful to Dr Harrison for setting the record straight and it is obvious from Dr Harrison's well-documented paper that what Dr Wakefield claims is wrong.

Brith Christenson, MD, PhD
Associate Professor
Sweden

*Address correspondence to this author at the Department of Communicable Disease Control and prevention, Uppsala County Council, Dag Hammarskjölds väg 17, SE-751-85 Uppsala, Sweden;
Email: brith.christensson@gmail.com

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