

RFK Jr.'s CDC plans to resurrect the unfounded link between vaccines and autism

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Last Friday, Health and Human Services (HHS) spokesperson Andrew Nixon announced that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) would initiate a comprehensive study investigating if there is a link between vaccines and autism. This is despite many landmark studies from the last two decades, including the CDC's, that show there is no such connection between the neuro-developmental disorder and vaccines or their ingredients.

The CDC statement noted:

As President Trump said in his Joint Address to Congress, the rate of autism in American children has skyrocketed. CDC will leave no stone unturned in its mission to figure out what exactly is happening. The American people expect high quality research and transparency and that is what CDC is delivering.

Nixon avoided answering any questions on how the study would be conducted, nor did he respond to queries regarding numerous peer-reviewed studies previously published that have completely discounted such assertions by anti-vaccine zealots. The call for such an investigation has all the hallmarks of RFK Jr.'s anti-vaccine stance, ensuring that the extracted data will correspond to his foregone conclusions.

His assertions that natural immunity to measles through infection can protect people against cancer and heart disease, and that cod liver oil and Vitamin A will miraculously ameliorate the disease are laughable. But this is being espoused by someone who sits at the head of the country's entire health apparatus.

This foray into scientific revisionism, considering the current measles outbreak in West Texas and New Mexico, is more than unsettling. More than 200 people have become infected with measles in the last two months, with dozens hospitalized and two deaths reported thus far.

This development in a previously checked disease is not because the virus that causes measles has undergone genetic changes or any increase in virulence. It is a product of the fascistic turn in the entire political structure that coincides with the social crisis of capitalism, which includes transforming the entire edifice of public health not to improve health, but to do the exact opposite.

It is appropriate to briefly review the evidence that supports vaccination and completely refutes Kennedy and his ilk, whose bald-faced lies are endangering the well-being and lives of people in America and throughout the world.

A landmark report by the Institute of Medicine (IOM), now part of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, has reaffirmed that vaccines are overwhelmingly safe and do not cause autism. The 2012 report, "Adverse Effects of Vaccines: Evidence and Causality," was conducted by a panel of medical experts who reviewed thousands of scientific studies to assess potential adverse effects of commonly used

vaccines, including the Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) vaccine. The researchers examined epidemiological data, clinical studies, and biological evidence to determine whether vaccines could be linked to serious health conditions, including autism.

One of the most significant findings of the report was the strong rejection of any causal link between the MMR vaccine and autism. The committee analyzed large-scale studies, including a Danish cohort study involving over 537,000 children, and found no increased risk of autism among vaccinated children compared to unvaccinated children. The review also dismissed the controversial 1998 study by Andrew Wakefield, which first suggested a link between MMR and autism, but was later retracted due to fraudulent data and unethical research practices. The IOM panel concluded that the weight of scientific evidence overwhelmingly supported the safety of vaccines and refuted any claims that they contribute to autism spectrum disorders.

Beyond autism, the report evaluated other potential vaccine-related health risks, including encephalopathy, febrile seizures, anaphylaxis, and joint pain. While the review found that the MMR vaccine could, in very rare cases, trigger mild febrile seizures or allergic reactions, these side effects were deemed temporary and not associated with long-term health consequences. The report reinforced that the benefits of vaccines in preventing severe and potentially deadly diseases far outweigh the risks of these minor adverse effects.

With vaccine hesitancy still a concern in public health, this extensive review provides critical reassurance about the safety of vaccines. The IOM's findings align with research by the CDC, the World Health Organization (WHO), and other leading health authorities, all of which have consistently stated that vaccines do not cause autism. As misinformation continues to circulate, studies like these serve as essential resources for public health officials, policymakers, and parents seeking reliable, science-backed information on vaccine safety.

A comprehensive nationwide cohort study published in Denmark in 2019 provided another critical report debunking concerns raised by vaccine skeptics about a link between the MMR vaccine and autism. Published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, the study was led by Anders Hviid and colleagues from the Statens Serum Institut, a Danish health research institution. The researchers analyzed data from 657,461 children born between 1999 and 2010, making it one of the most extensive studies ever conducted on this topic. With a follow-up period extending to August 2013, the study provided robust, long-term evidence regarding the safety of the MMR vaccine.

To assess whether the vaccine increased the risk of autism, the researchers used nationwide health registry data to compare the incidence of autism in vaccinated versus unvaccinated children. The study also examined whether certain groups, such as children with autistic siblings or other autism risk factors, were more susceptible to vaccine-related autism. Using adjusted hazard ratios and statistical models, the researchers accounted for various confounding factors, ensuring that their findings

were not influenced by unrelated variables. Among the 657,461 children included in the study, 6,517 were diagnosed with autism, corresponding to an incidence rate of 129.7 cases per 100,000 person-years.

The findings were clear. There was no increased risk of autism among children who received the MMR vaccine. The adjusted hazard ratio for autism in vaccinated children was 0.93 (95 percent confidence interval: 0.85 to 1.02), which means there was no statistical association between MMR vaccination and autism development. Furthermore, the study found no evidence that MMR vaccination triggered autism in susceptible subgroups, including children with a family history of autism or other predisposing factors.

These results reinforce the scientific consensus that vaccines do not cause autism, debunking persistent misinformation and emphasizing the importance of immunization in preventing life-threatening diseases. The large sample size, rigorous methodology, and use of high-quality population-wide health data make the findings particularly significant.

As if anticipating the fallout for vaccination of the inauguration of Donald Trump as president and installation of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. as secretary of health, the CDC reaffirmed on December 30, 2024 that there were no links between the vaccines, their ingredients such as thimerosal, and autism. The CDC referenced its important 2004 report, a large-scale study that found the MMR vaccine does not cause autism.

Published in *Pediatrics* in 2004, the study analyzed vaccination records of 624 children with autism and 1,824 school-matched control children in metropolitan Atlanta. Researchers sought to determine whether the timing of MMR vaccination was different between children diagnosed with autism and those without the disorder. The study was part of ongoing efforts to investigate vaccine safety following concerns raised by now-discredited claims of a link between MMR and autism. The findings showed no significant difference in the age at which children with autism and those without received their first MMR dose. Most children in both groups were vaccinated between 12 and 17 months, and there was no association between early MMR vaccination (before 18 or 24 months) and autism diagnosis. While slightly more children with autism (93.4 percent) were vaccinated before 36 months compared to the control group (90.6 percent), the study's authors attributed this to immunization requirements for early intervention programs rather than a causal relationship.

These results align with multiple large-scale epidemiological studies and a 2004 Institute of Medicine (IOM) review, which found no credible evidence linking vaccines to autism. The study reinforces the scientific consensus that vaccines are safe and essential for preventing infectious diseases.

As the CDC noted in its latest update on "Autism and Vaccines," the vaccines have protected "the health of children in the United States so well that most parents today have never seen first-hand the devastating consequences of diseases now stopped by vaccines." The fact that measles was declared eliminated in 2000 and we are now witnessing a rise in measles is a dangerous turn of events.

On the important and devastating topic of autism, a comprehensive 2018 review of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), led by Dr. Catherine Lord and colleagues, provides an in-depth analysis of the condition's causes, diagnosis and treatment. Published in *The Lancet*, the report synthesizes decades of research to clarify the biological underpinnings of ASD, while addressing common misconceptions. It highlights significant progress in autism awareness and treatment, but also underscores the ongoing need for better interventions, particularly for adults living with the disorder.

The study reaffirms that genetics play a dominant role in ASD, with heritability estimates ranging from 74 to 93 percent. Researchers have identified more than 100 genetic variations linked to autism, affecting brain development and function. The report also outlines environmental risk factors, such as advanced parental age, prenatal exposure to certain medications (like valproic acid), and complications during pregnancy.

However, it emphasizes that no single environmental factor is responsible for ASD, and the condition arises from a complex interplay of genetics and early brain development.

One of the report's most critical findings is the complete lack of evidence linking vaccines to autism. Despite persistent public concerns, multiple scientific studies have debunked any connection between childhood vaccinations and ASD. The authors stress the importance of accurate information and public education to combat misinformation, which can contribute to vaccine hesitancy and put public health at risk.

Placing these critical reports in the necessary global context, the CDC warned that stagnant vaccination rates are raising concerns over the resurgence of measles worldwide. According to the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR), despite decades of progress measles remains endemic in all six World Health Organization (WHO) regions, with 10.3 million estimated cases in 2023—a 20 percent increase from 2022. This surge coincides with a troubling stagnation in global measles vaccine coverage, which remains at 83 percent for the first dose of the measles-containing vaccine (MCV1)—well below the 95 percent threshold needed for herd immunity.

The report underscores how the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted immunization programs, leading to the lowest MCV1 coverage levels since 2008. While global measles-related deaths declined by 8 percent (from 116,800 in 2022 to 107,500 in 2023), the increase in cases suggests that many low-income and conflict-affected regions are now at heightened risk of larger outbreaks. In these vulnerable areas, vaccine access remains a persistent challenge, further exacerbating global health inequities. Additionally, the number of countries experiencing large or disruptive measles outbreaks jumped from 36 in 2022 to 57 in 2023, signaling an urgent need for stronger vaccination campaigns.

Despite RFK Jr.'s assertion to Congress to "follow the science," an ignominious echo of Biden's failed promise to the American people to respond to the COVID pandemic, making the Democrats complicit in the current turn to quackery, the health secretary is using his pulpit to further his own unhinged notions on public health. In particular, he is utilizing work being done by a network of vaccine skeptics to promote fraudulent and discredited "scientific studies" published in fringe journals as bona fide scientifically grounded research.

Such developments must be resisted by scientists and researchers, who have been placed in the cross hairs of Trump and Musk's attempt to uproot the entire edifice of science. This is despite the role of scientific research and knowledge in providing the world with the longevity it has experienced in the last century. But this requires a turn to the working class as the social force to put an end to capitalism and establish socialism.



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