

Great Ormond Street 
Hospital for Children

NHS Trust

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June 2006

Dear Sir / Madam,

The time has come to draw a line under the question of any association between MMR vaccine and autism. The UK's children are in danger of serious illness or death if they are left unimmunised. The number of confirmed cases of measles has increased dramatically this year and, only a few months ago, we had the first death from measles since 1992.

A large body of scientific evidence shows no link between the vaccine and autism or bowel disease. Confidence in the safety of MMR had been returning and its uptake slowly increasing, so it would be tragic if it is once again shaken by ill-informed reporting of inadequate, preliminary research and supposition.

An example of this is recent media reporting of research from America. The principal researcher made it clear that their findings of measles virus in the gut of the children with autism did not prove a link with the MMR vaccine. However, little media coverage was given to this statement and none to another piece of research showing how difficult it is to accurately test for the measles virus.

We are now faced with a potentially serious situation. Years of low uptake mean large numbers of unprotected children are now entering school. Unless this is rectified urgently, and children are immunised, there will be further outbreaks and more unnecessary deaths. It has been suggested that allowing parents to choose single vaccines would have averted this situation. The reasons why this would not be an effective solution have been well rehearsed. In spite of having carefully considered this option, no country offers them as an alternative to the MMR vaccine.

It is not too late to avert this predictable tragedy. It is time that due weight is given to the overwhelming body of scientific evidence in favour of the vaccine. Misguided concepts of 'balance' have confused and dangerously misled parents. We all, media, politicians and health professionals, have a responsibility to protect the health of our children.

Yours faithfully

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