The Tyranny of What we Know to be True

Once in the not-so-distant past, people everywhere knew that the Sun and all the stars spun around the Earth which had been proven to be at the centre of the universe. This was such an accepted piece of knowledge, that even asking questions about it could have the most dire
consequences as Gallileo quickly discovered. No amount of evidence to the contrary could convince the powers that be that they were wrong and decades of ridicule, executions, vilification and other forms of duress were used to suppress the obvious truth. Eventually though, the truth prevailed - overcoming what I like to call the tyranny of what we know to be true. This phrase describes those beliefs which have no basis in fact but are so much a part of our consciousness, they are accepted without question.

Human history has a long record of these tyrannical beliefs; the earth is flat, bleeding is the best way to treat all illnesses, it is unnecessary for doctors to wash their hands between patients, and vaccination is the best and only way to protect against infectious diseases, to name just a few.

Today, this tyranny is incredibly evident when dealing with the media in Australia. Without meaning to in so many instances, the ingrained belief system of the journalists creates a wall between balanced reporting and the public. This powerful form of censorship has succeeded in suppressing information on the risks of vaccination for decades in much the same way as the influence of the Catholic church succeeded in suppressing evidence of the falsehood of a geocentric universe.

Six days ago, I was asked to appear on Mornings with Kerri-Anne - a regular early-morning program which had, a week earlier, presented two doctors pushing the viewpoint that vaccines are perfectly safe, and not administering them was stupid, harmful and irresponsible.

There is nothing unusual in this message. Due in part to the efforts of the Australian Vaccination Network, more and more parents are questioning the administration of shots to their children. This drop in vaccination rates has led to more pressure on the media to paint vaccine refusers as a risk to those who vaccinate and to block any information which might call into question the safety or effectiveness of vaccines.

What was different this time however, is that after airing this show, the station was inundated with phone calls and emails from parents who have seen the dangers of vaccination first-hand and others whose research has led them to reject vaccination because of its risks and ineffectiveness.

So many of you complained about this show, the station felt it had no option but to try and pay lip service to the pro-choice side. When they first contacted me, they wanted to have a parent go on against Dr Penny Adams, one of the doctors who had appeared the week before and whose extreme views had caused such a strong reaction in the first place. I insisted however that there be at least one more person from our side on the show, so they agreed to have me appear as well as Diana Mund, one of our long-time AVN members, a paediatric nurse and the mother of two unvaccinated and very healthy children.

Now, if you are really trying to give some balance to any debate, you need to give both sides an equal opportunity. With two doctors on the week before, one would have thought that balance would have been two pro-choice advocates the next week and a fair airing of the subject with equal time given to both.

This is not what happened however. I feel that I did get some good points across and the participation of Diana Mund was absolutely brilliant! She was able to talk about her own experience nursing vaccine damaged children and how that affected her decision not to vaccinate her own children, one of whom has just returned from a world trip without any vaccines or illnesses. She said that her children didn't have eczema, asthma or any of
the other illnesses which are now so common and that when they do get sick, they are over it quickly and the symptoms are mild. These are all very important things fearful parents who are considering vaccination need to hear.

Despite all of this however, there were constant interruptions and Kerri-Anne made her pro-vaccination stance very clear.

After the program, many of you wrote in to complain about the obvious bias on the program. One of you has contacted me to let me know that the assistant at the program you spoke with said that they were 'very cranky' with Kerri-Anne for not letting me speak and that there have been so many families of vaccine-injured kids calling in to complain, that not only are they planning on another show on this issue early in 2009, but that they have started a database of vaccine-injured kids to call upon for that program.

The message is - each and every one of you is so very powerful - don't ever doubt that! And it is time for you all to exercise that power and the place to begin is the Kerri-Anne show.

I know that many of you haven't seen the program in question (my kids taped it for me on our Austar box but I have no idea of how to take that file and put it onto my computer - if any of you computer gurus out there can help, please contact me at [mailto:meryl@avn.org.au meryl@avn.org.au]). However, all you need to do is to write in and ask them to do more programs on the subject of vaccine risks. If you have a child who has been vaccine affected, let them know that too. Include a picture if you'd like - that brings the message home in a very strong way.

If enough of you do this, the show will go ahead and hopefully, may even be more balanced.

At the same time, you can include a copy of your letter to Julia Timms, an Executive Producer at 60 minutes who contacted me about 6 weeks ago and was interested in doing a program on autism. I sent her reams of information and never heard back. I did call her when I went down to Sydney to see if the show was going to go ahead and whether or not she wanted to meet with me to discuss it further, but never received a call back. She also needs to hear from you regarding your desire to get this show to air. Her email address is [mailto:jtimms@nine.com.au jtimms@nine.com.au]. A short, polite letter from you will do a world of good.

Below are a couple of facsimile letters that you can use as a skeleton for your own message. Feel free to use the text as is if you wish - as long as you do write in. Be sure to include your details (name, address and phone number) so they know that this message comes from a real person.

This email newsletter goes out to almost 6000 people. Imagine the response if each and every one of you took 5 minutes to write a brief message to these two programs!

I leave this in your hands and I congratulate you on the success of your efforts last week and hope to see a continuation of this good work in the next few days.

Yours in health,
Meryl
Dear Kerri-Anne,

Thank you for asking Meryl Dorey from the AVN and Diana Mund to appear on your program last week. It is so rare to see any information regarding the risks of vaccination on mainstream TV. I do feel however that the program should have been more balanced and that if one week had included only the pro-vaccination point of view, the next week should have only included the pro-vaccination choice viewpoint.

I am a parent who struggled to make the best possible informed choice for my children and only did so after extensive research into this subject. I would like to ask that you revisit this issue on your program and next time, either truly give the AVN equal time or else facilitate an open and unbiased debate between experts on both sides without any bias towards one or the other.

Kind regards,

Julia Timms,
Associate Producer
60 Minutes
[LINK:mailto:jtimms@nine.com.au] jtimms@nine.com.au

Dear Ms Timms,

I understand that you have been considering producing an episode of 60 Minutes regarding the link between autism, behaviour problems and vaccination. I am a parent who has looked at this issue for my own children and my research which has been extensive, has led me to the conclusion that the balance of evidence points to a strong connection between vaccinations and autism.

In the United States, the parents of Hannah Polling won their vaccine damages case when the American government had to pay them compensation and admit that their daughter's autism had indeed been caused by vaccines. At this point, there are almost 5,000 other families who are involved in a class-action lawsuit against the US government for the same reason.

In the past 20 years, autism has gone from affecting one child in 20,000 to one child in 67 and though doctors are quick to say that vaccines are not involved, they can't say what the cause is. Since Dr Andrew Wakefield's first paper was published 10 years ago in the Lancet, raising the hypothesis that vaccines may cause gut issues and behavioural problems,
numerous other peer-reviewed articles by researchers around the world have verified and expanded upon his original findings.

I would like to urge you to go ahead with your proposed feature and to invite the Australian Vaccination Network to participate in this program as they have contact details for many, many families whose children have become autistic after vaccination.

Kind regards

[LINK: http://rs6.net/tn.jsp?e=001FHB6bb-8h6IySPxevWD14IK1vnJmLzzOJtfdOCzBeTji7CRbGsySS-tFQoz93ZGwJwpKfwCUkeo_muzLNknZTN5Va4g18PU2x6hRAtjJ4wsGOYK1fKzaJZBmknRGnFPH6CkIeGskDrH5Br- mcYUo6Pa8nVLTc_OgwXzElbr18mIs=]

RECOMMENDED MEDIA

[IMAGE: vaccine damaged children] NEW!
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[IMAGE: AVN donation]