

ADVOCACY

People First of Toledo Monthly Newsletter



**People First
of
Toledo**

Do Vaccines Cause Autism?

By Quinn Thomas

No one currently knows for sure exactly what causes autism, but there are lots of theories. One very popular theory is vaccines. This is heavily debated, but about half of all Americans aren't sure whether it's true or not.

This theory was first proposed in 1998 by Dr. Andrew Wakefield. He performed colonoscopies on eight autistic children and then reported that their autism had all been caused by the MMR (measles-mumps-rubella) vaccine. His study was published in *The Lancet*.

Dr. Wakefield's co-authors later retracted their names from the article. They didn't

UPCOMING EVENTS

SPECTRUM OF POSSIBILITIES

April 12, 8:15-3:00, at Lourdes University Franciscan Center. Registration is \$30, scholarships available.

GAME NIGHT

April 12, 5:00-7:30, at Courageous Acres.

AAPD NATIONAL COMMUNITY EVENT

April 23, 6:30, virtual. This event is open to everyone and celebrates disability rights wins throughout the past year.

GLASS CITY MARATHON

April 27-28, all day, 2801 West Bancroft Street, Toledo.

CAMP CLEAN UP DAYS

May 4 & 11, 9:00-3:00, at Courageous Acres. These are our next Days of Volunteering. Pizza will be provided.

believe in it anymore. And in 2005, *The Lancet* itself retracted the article. This happened after claims of Dr. Wakefield having conflicts of interest in the study, committing severe research misconduct, and outright lying about the results. Andrew Wakefield's medical license was later revoked. The licensing board was concerned about his "callous disregard" for the kids he was supposed to be helping.

Andrew Wakefield has become the center of the anti-vaccine movement over the past twenty-five years. He's even made a movie about it.

Dozens of studies on thousands of autistic children have been completed since Mr. Wakefield's study. One alone looked at 95,000 kids' health records. All of these other studies found no links between autism and vaccines.

But Mr. Wakefield's theory is popular. It has led to many parents choosing not to vaccinate their children. In 2000,

measles was declared to be completely gone from the United States. Since then, it's come back. Measles is four times more common in Europe than it used to be. A disease that was gone has come back and killed people.

Despite Mr. Wakefield's initial study only talking about the MMR vaccine, some parents have been choosing to avoid all of them. Because of this, other diseases like the flu have become more common. The flu can be deadly sometimes. It's more deadly to children who have not been vaccinated against it. 85% of kids who die of the flu are unvaccinated.

And finally, consider if it was true. Suppose vaccines really did cause autism. Wouldn't you rather have a happy, healthy, living autistic child than one who isn't?



OUR NEXT MEETING

April 18th, 6:00-7:30, virtually on Zoom or in-person at the Holland Library in Community Room B. Meeting dues are \$5 or \$50 for twelve months.

State Representative Michele Grim will come out to speak to us about relevant disability-related topics and bills that are of interest to our community.