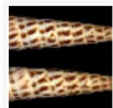


↓ FS AbC CC CH CO/VL CW DM **GMP** GW HG MPM PX PY RRR SW TPP VM

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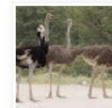
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# Genomics, Medicine, and Pseudoscience

This is Steven Salzberg's blog on genomics, pseudoscience, medical breakthroughs, higher education, and other topics, including skepticism about unscientific medical practices. Here's where I can say what I really think about abuses and distortions of science, wherever I see them.

## More misinformation on the flu from Mercola

By Steven Salzberg on 10/18/2009  
07:41:00 AM

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As a followup to my post a few weeks ago on [scare-mongering about influenza vaccines](#), I want to point out [a beautiful dismantling of Dr. Mercola's latest nonsense](#) by my colleagues over at Science-Based Medicine.

It seems that Mercola posted an article on his website titled "Do NOT Let Your Child Get Flu Vaccine -- 9 Reasons Why". (I'm not providing the link because I don't want to increase his web traffic, not even a tiny bit.) Not surprisingly, every single reason is wrong, misleading, stupid, or all three. As Dr. Joseph Albiez [writes in his post](#), "There are so many mistakes, so much misinformation in so little space, it's almost a work of art."

I don't want to repeat all of Dr. Albiez's dismantling of Mercola's bogus claims (I recommend reading his post for the full list), but I want to mention a couple, just to show how dishonest - or maybe just plain stupid - Mercola is. Here, then, are some of his reasons for not vaccinating your children:

"5. Over-vaccination is a common practice now in America. American children are subjected to 29 vaccines by the age of two."

Wrong and wrong. First, "over-vaccination" is a term invented by anti-vaccination groups. There is no evidence that you can over-vaccinate - all the vaccinations available today help to prevent infectious diseases. More vaccines simply prevent more diseases. Second, there are only 10 vaccines [on the routine schedule](#) in the U.S., not 29. Some of them require booster shots, but these are not separate vaccines. But in any case, this is irrelevant because even if there were more, the evidence shows that they are beneficial.

Mercola's sixth reason is this:

"6. Modern medicine has no explanation for autism, despite its continued rise in prevalence. Yet autism is not reported among Amish children who go unvaccinated."

This one I've seen before. Jay Gordon, well-known anti-vaccination doctor and Jenny McCarthy sidekick, said the same thing on Larry King Live last year. This too is wrong, as Dr. Albiez also pointed out. [The Amish do have autism, and they do vaccinate](#). So this is just a complete non-sequitur. It has nothing to do with the influenza vaccine.

Perhaps the most outrageous scare-mongering is this one from Mercola:

"3. Adjuvants are added to vaccines to boost production of antibodies but may trigger autoimmune reactions. Some adjuvants are mercury (thimerosal), aluminum and squalene. Why would you sign a consent form for your children to be injected with mercury, which is even more brain-toxic than lead?"

Note the use of the incredibly hysterical phrase "brain-toxic". Scary indeed, if only it were true. But no, this is wrong, wrong, wrong. First, the tiny bit of truth: yes, adjuvants are small trace elements, including aluminum, that make vaccines more effective. Note that this allows vaccines to be effective with a *smaller dose* of the immune agent, and there's never been any evidence that adjuvants are harmful (they've been used in vaccines for 50 years). But *there is no adjuvant in the H1N1 vaccine*.

### About Me

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