Stephen Antwi

Staniszewska- De Mott, Jadwiga

Introduction to Academic Writing

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Debunking the myth "Vaccines Cause Autism"

Despite the immunization rates of children rising globally, there is some vaccine hesitancy among some people who believe that vaccines cause autism. Over the years, researchers have questioned the role played by vaccines in causing autism. A group of authors led by Andrew Wakefield, a British gastroenterologist, asserted that vaccination was related to autism (Rao et al. 95). On the other hand, many scientists have refuted this claim citing it as unfounded. These people have relied on the recent studies that have failed to determine the relationship between vaccination and autism. The claim that jabs cause autism is false because the initiators of this assertion committed serious mistakes in their study, and recent studies have failed to confirm this assertion.

The British researchers were the first to question the relationship between inoculations and autism after the measles mumps rubella (MMR) vaccine was administered to children in the 1990s. One of these researchers, Wakefield, advanced the study further and posited that immunization had a link with autism. Later in 1998, Wakefield and twelve co-authors claimed that they had established that vaccination had a link with autism (Rao et al. 95). This was after these researchers found that eight of the children who had received the MMR vaccine had intestinal symptoms and signs (Gerber and Offit 456). Despite Rao et al. not finding a causal link between autism and MMR, they suggested that there was a relationship between MRM and autism (96). However, later scientific studies like a 1999 study by Taylor, et al. and a 2006 study by Fombonne et al. have failed to establish a connection between the two, which shows that the claim that vaccines cause autism was a misconception.

First, the claim that vaccines caused autism is a misconception since Wakefield, and his co-authors did not include a control group in their study. Typically, scientific studies seeking to establish a relationship between variables include control subjects. Since Wakefield and his co-authors did not have control subjects in their research, Gerber and Offit opined that these authors were precluded from finding out if the autism cases were coincidental or resulted from the MMR vaccine (456). Also, considering that only eight children showed signs of autism out of about 50,000 children who received the jab in Britain, according to the health records, it means that the cases were coincidental (Gerber and Offit 456). Therefore, the claim that vaccines cause autism was unsubstantiated since larger sample size is needed to confirm scientific study findings.

Second, the assertion that vaccines cause autism is a misconception because recent scientific studies have failed to confirm this. Qian et al. posited that more comprehensive studies with bigger samples have consistently yielded contrasting results (1). It is essential to note that Wakefield et al. studied twelve children. Undeniably, this small sample could not be relied upon to generalize the causal link between the MMR vaccine and autism. In 2012, the National Academy of Medicine revealed that the existing evidence was sufficient to reject the claim that a causal connection existed between the two (153). In addition, a 2013 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) revealed that immunizations do not lead to autism. This study compared the number of antigens resulting from the vaccines among the children suffering from autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and those without ASD. The results showed no variation in the number of antigens, which demonstrated that the vaccines did not cause ASD. Thus, this claim was utterly false because no credible studies show vaccines cause autism.

Third, the claim that vaccines caused autism was a misconception because the study by Wakefield et al. had serious mistakes. One of the errors of the study was that the researchers selected a few participants who could confirm the result they wanted instead of using a scientific method in choosing the participants. In addition, these researchers did not offer an accurate account of how they chose the participants. Also, the study's findings were doctored to suit the researchers` objective of showing that vaccines caused autism, which is against scientific studies' precepts. This evidence shows that their study cannot be perceived as a scientific study and was unethical. In 1998 the Wakefield et al. study was partially withdrawn; however, in 2010, it was removed entirely (Qian et al. 1). The study's retraction confirmed that the information it contained was deceptive and that it was necessary to retract it to prevent the public from accessing false information.

Since there is no credible evidence showing that vaccines cause autism, it is abundantly clear that this assertion was a misconception. Wakefield and his colleagues did not include a control group to establish a relationship between vaccines and autism. Also, these researchers committed serious errors in their study, like selecting participants who would confirm their aim. Most importantly to mention is that the comprehensive scientific studies that have been conducted using larger sample sizes have shown opposite results. The fact is that inoculations do not bring about autism, as noted by reputable institutions like the CDC.

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