



Press Release

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PRESS RELEASE BY THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

The Advisory Committee on Immunisation Policy reacts strongly to the article appearing in the Sunday Times of Malta of the 16th April “MMR vaccine and autism – the movie ‘they don’t want you to see’ ”. The article has no scientific basis, and merely promotes the movie “Vaxxed” as a given truth to a link between the MMR vaccine and autism. The movie is produced by Andrew Wakefield, the very man who started the controversy in 1998 by publishing a paper in the medical journal The Lancet, linking the MMR vaccine with autism in 12 children. This paper was eventually found to have broken several ethical rules, and its co-authors even withdrew their names from the paper. The Lancet retracted the paper in 2010, and Wakefield was struck off the UK Medical Register.

There is no link between the MMR vaccine and autism. This has been proven by dozens of scientific papers in medical journals, including the New England Journal of Medicine, the British Medical Journal, the Journal of Paediatric Disease, and the Journal of Developmental Paediatrics, who all tried to establish a link between the two, and found none. A study in the Journal of the American Medical Association, published in April 2015, involved an analysis of 96,000 children. The findings showed that there was no harmful association between the MMR vaccine and autism spectrum disorder, even among children already at a higher risk of autism.

The Advisory Committee on Immunisation Policy strongly urges the public to continue immunising their children according to the National Immunisation Schedule, including the MMR vaccine. Measles is the leading cause of death in young children according to the WHO. In 2015, there were 134,200 deaths caused by measles. On the positive side, between 2010 and 2015 measles vaccination resulted in a drop of 79% in measles deaths worldwide. Vaccines are safe and effective in reducing the risks of serious infectious diseases, and are highly recommended by all the world scientific bodies.