

The Wakefield Timeline

1994: Wakefield files for a patent for a diagnostic tool to detect measles virus in bowel tissue and body fluids, claiming that the MMR could cause “autistic enterocolitis.”

1996: A lawyer named Richard Barr hires Wakefield to support a legal attack against the MMR vaccine. He pays Wakefield over £400,000 (\$525,000).

1997: Wakefield files for a patent of his own version of the measles vaccine.

1998: The Lancet publishes Wakefield’s findings of 12 children with autism and colitis. Days after his study is published, Wakefield meets with managers at England’s Royal Free Hospital to discuss the importance of using single measles vaccines.

1999: The head of Royal Free Hospital informs Wakefield that he must replicate his study to confirm or refute his findings. Wakefield refuses.

2001: Wakefield still doesn’t repeat his study and is asked to resign from Royal Free Hospital.

2003: Lawyers for the claimants (the twelve autistic children) say they no longer have the evidence to prove that the MMR vaccine caused the autism.

2004: An investigation by a reporter finds that Wakefield had filed for a patent for the single-measles vaccine prior to conducting his study. The investigation also finds that although Wakefield claimed to find traces of measles virus in the colons of these children, molecular studies on these samples found no trace of measles in these children’s body fluids. Additionally, medical records of the children are reviewed, and reveal that several of them had shown signs of behavioral and neurological regression *before receiving the MMR vaccine*.

2005: Japan withdraws the MMR vaccine due to contaminants.

2006: The measles in England becomes rampant due to a decrease in vaccination, and for the first time in fourteen years, a patient dies from the measles.

2007: Investigations reveal that Wakefield was paid £435,643 by lawyers for his “research”

2010: The England and Wales High Court tries Wakefield for professional misconduct and finds him guilty of all the above.

2010: Wakefield’s article is retracted by the Lancet. Wakefield is stripped of his medical license.

References:

- Deer, B. (2011). How the case against the MMR vaccine was fixed. *British Medical Journal*, 342, c5347.
Deer, B. (2011). How the vaccine crisis was meant to make money. *British Medical Journal*, 342, c5258.
Deer, B. (2010). Wakefield’s “autistic enterocolitis” under the microscope. *British Medical Journal*, 340, c1127.