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Profile



PaIMD is a practicing internist in the Great Lakes region of the U.S.. Aside from the great joy he finds in his family and his work, he likes communicating some of that joy to others. He has a special interest in the ways patients---and we are all patients at one time or another---are deceived by charlatans. He aims to change the world, one reader at a time. Previous writings can still be found [here](#), and [here](#). I also write twice a month for [Science-Based Medicine](#)

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Musings on the intersection of science, medicine, and culture

No shame: antivaccine ghouls defame the dead, and elevate the disgraced

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Posted on: November 18, 2009 7:57 PM, by [PaIMD](#)

There are a couple of quotes circulating widely claiming that major players in flu vaccine development are "denouncing" the vaccine.

From (shudder!) [mercola.com](#):

"Dr. Anthony Morris, a distinguished virologist and former Chief Vaccine Office at the U.S. Federal Drug Administration (FDA), states that "There is no evidence that any influenza vaccine thus far developed is effective in preventing or mitigating any attack of influenza" and that "The producers of these vaccines know they are worthless, but they go on selling them anyway."

And:

And in November 2007, the UK newspaper The Scotsman, made public warnings by the inventor of the "flu jab," Dr. Graeme Laver.

Dr. Laver was a major Australian scientist involved in the invention of a flu vaccine, in addition to playing a leading scientific role in the discovery of anti-flu drugs. He went on record as saying the vaccine he helped to create was ineffective and [that] natural infection with the flu was safer. "I have never been impressed with its efficacy," said Dr. Laver."

Who are these guys?

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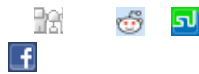
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Dr J. Anthony Morris was apparently a bureaucrat at the FDA in the early 1970s and [was forced out during a political battle](#). He is not a "distinguished virologist", and his only two publications indexed by PubMed are from the late 1940s-early 1950s and dealt with bacteria, not viruses. There is no reason to credit his opinions with any more value than the guy holding up "The End Is Nigh!" sign on the corner.

[Graeme Laver](#) [was a distinguished virologist](#) and helped develop our modern understanding of influenza, its epidemics, and anti-influenza medications. I cannot find any quotes at The Scotsman like the one mentioned, and I cannot find any sources that show he held a deep skepticism for flu vaccination. Even if he had (and he can no longer speak for himself), the opinion of a single virologist is not how we develop public health policy.

These irrelevant, presumably out-of-context, and possibly fictitious quotes are another sign of the moral, intellectual, and--frankly--cognitive bankruptcy of the anti-vaccine movement.



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Comments

- 1 Where were you two weeks ago!
I caused major irritation in my extended family recently when a vaccine debate arose ... and the 'informed' people tried to tout mercola.com as a reputable source of information.
Upon observation of the website of course i found the typical pattern that all the 'experts' had products or books to sell and were against any medicine that didnt sell their snake oils.
And of course the family bought the slick production quality, refusing to see the lies, refuted claims and sales tactics.
Happily, that part of the family is out of town and on the in-law side ... so they won't make my side of the family sick before our vaccinations take hold ... or make my son sick, who is too young for the flu shot.

Posted by: Ken | [November 18, 2009 9:11 PM](#)

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2 Found it at the [Times online](#)

From The Times November 24, 2007

The inventor of the flu vaccination, which is given to 15 million Britons each year, said that he feared a severe outbreak of the virus and that he had never been very impressed with its efficacy.

He was recommending that the best way to protect public health was to make Tamiflu and Relenza available over the counter. "He said that as they are available only by prescription, valuable time is lost as people wait to see their GPs." It's quite irrelevant to the swine flu vaccine, because swine flu vaccine is specifically targeted against the actual pandemic virus.

Posted by: davidp | [November 18, 2009 9:26 PM](#)

3 DavidP: The Times article also points out that Laver received royalties from the sale of Relenza. Doesn't that make him an unreliable Big Pharma profiteer according to the alties? Tsk, and Mercola.com quoting him too.

Posted by: Dianne | [November 18, 2009 9:49 PM](#)

4 He was recommending that the best way to protect public health was to make Tamiflu and Relenza available over the counter.

This is a puzzling recommendation, since resistance to antivirals can develop easily, especially with uncontrolled use (prophylactic use etc). I can't understand a virologist making such a recommendation.

Posted by: T. Bruce McNeely | [November 18, 2009 11:17 PM](#)

5 Okay, researching Dr. Laver further, it appears that he is against the prophylactic use of antivirals. There is a point to his suggestion, in that antivirals are best used early in the course of illness. However, better than distributing it OTC, seeing a doctor and getting a prescription in advance that could be filled at the onset of illness would be preferable, since instruction on when to start it could be given. I offered that to my sister if she was unable to get the H1N1 vaccine. Fortunately it was available a few days later. As far as his reservations about flu vax, see comment #2.

Posted by: T. Bruce McNeely | [November 18, 2009 11:31 PM](#)

6 What! Mercola left out the "researcher-who-revealed-the autism-thimerisol-link-at-the-Simpsonwood-conference-is-later-elevated-to-high-CDC-position-to-shut-him-up" *vignette*? And I thought Mercola was the "compleat quack"?

Posted by: Denice Walter | [November 19, 2009 10:16 AM](#)

7 I looked into the Anthony Morris thing once when I was blind-sided with it by an anti-vaxxer. That person claimed he was the former HEAD of the FDA, and when I quickly

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discovered using the shitty web browser on my phone that he was just the head of virology, she was like, "Same difference!"

Anyway, what I wanted to say is that in addition to what you point out, I have found ZERO EVIDENCE that Anthony Morris actually said this. It's quite possible he did, but the highest quality source I was able to find was... whale.to. Seriously. That is the most "reliable" source I was able to find tying Anthony Morris to this quote. So, uh... yeah.

Posted by: [James Sweet](#) | [November 19, 2009 11:51 AM](#)

8 "forced out during a political battle"

not quite. Dr Morris notified his superiors of his plans to go on a national TV talk show (to present an opinion that wasn't the FDA's official position) and was told to cancel. He went anyways, and was fired for insubordination.

Posted by: [David](#) | [November 19, 2009 1:20 PM](#)

9 David, do you have a source? I would love to know the whole story on Anthony Morris, but the only sources I can find have been completely unreliable.

Posted by: [James Sweet](#) | [November 19, 2009 3:21 PM](#)

10 Ah, I found some more background on Morris:

<http://sacredcowwursthaus.blogspot.com/2009/10/bill-maher-vaccines-and-autism.html>

Interesting. Still doesn't tell the whole story, and I'd love to have some direct citations, but at least this person claims to be pulling from old news articles rather than, um, whale.to...

Posted by: [James Sweet](#) | [November 19, 2009 3:25 PM](#)

11 James, there is a JAMA article from 1974, but my library doesn't include online access for that year.

Posted by: [PaIMD](#) | [November 19, 2009 3:28 PM](#)

12 A (very quacky, so feel free to come over and help me take him down) commentor on my blog pointed me to an article on Laver:

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-496095/Flu-jab-inventor-warns-killer-epidemic--claims-vaccine-powerless-stop-it.html#ixzz0XR18eZhu>

There was also a commentary on the Morris affair published in Science in 1972. I've obtained a copy, but haven't gotten around to reading it yet.

Posted by: [Alexander Cheezem](#) | [November 20, 2009 8:28 PM](#)

13 Science is being abused by those in power and people no longer have faith in scientists, And their ability to adhere to the scientific method. Take climategate when data is manipulated to further an agenda and its exposed for what most knew was just a way to tax the globe and a scam then how can we trust what anyone says?? Should we believe big pharma who has bought off the government with money?? why do we pay for

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research and developement but the rest of the world pasy less for drugs then us?? Why is china allowed to pollute the environment and we have to pay to clean it up??? Why does a certain drug company actually hold the patent for the HNI virus ITSELF not the vaccine but the VIRUS. You want people to believe then tell the truth.

Posted by: Al Gore | [November 30, 2009 12:58 PM](#)

Etceterata



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14 Very professional to call people names like "anti-vaxers."

Can you point me to any randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled studies that prove the effectiveness of influenza vaccination?

Thought not.

When the WHO changes the very definition of pandemic in order to push flu vaccines, you'd have to be a brainwashed moron not to be skeptical.

Posted by: John | [June 29, 2010 10:48 PM](#)

15 You are not big on ethics, John. I bet you think that Wakefield is an upright guy for having those children go through painful and invasive tests that were not medically warranted.

Those double-blind placebo controlled studies were done years ago in a place called Willowbrook School.

You see, that was a place where disabled children were warehoused (despite it being called a school). They were used as guinea pigs in that the type of study you are advocating for both polio and hepatitis B.

Some of the kids did end up with the disease (especially those that were deliberately infected) being studied, and got to live the rest of their life either disabled, debilitated or just die quicker. You can read more here:

<http://www.law.duke.edu/journals/dlj/articles/DLJ57P517.HTM>

Posted by: Chris | [June 29, 2010 11:33 PM](#)

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