

Jaycob Maciel

Writing Seminar

Mr. Hanson

September 17, 2022

The Case of a Liar

The 16th President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln states that “You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time”. With the story of Dr. Andrew Wakefield and his colleagues who falsely claim to discover the link between the MMR vaccine and autism in children, was a false theory. For it was a false discovery and was not supported with a scientific attitude but also affected the lives of others.

It is important to know who Andrew Wakefield is to understand his motives clearly. Andrew Wakefield is an anti-vaccine activist who also was a physician. He has proper credentials, but he lied about his end results making his work false. Several people looked at his work and even tested it many times but can never get his end results.

First, it is important to understand the background story of what happened. Andrew Wakefield and 12 of his colleagues made this case. Within this case, it claims that MMR causes autism. At the time of the publication, this blew up for parents, who, of course, care about their children were concerned because as a baby you’re supposed to get the shot. Parents were thinking about the benefit of their children, of course, to not getting the shot because of his publication, since it seemed that he had the proper work and evidence to prove that this vaccine will cause autism. With a lack of shots being given, there was a big drop. The MMR vaccine was

prevention for children of getting the MMR, but since they were not receiving it, they were prone to other diseases.

In continuation his case was looked at by many others in his field. GMC also known as general medical counselor looked into his work that was more prior and found it to be false as well. So what they did was go look into his case that came out in 1998 and they had realized that the study was falsely claimed, for it did not link MMR to autism like how he had stated. GMC states that “noting the elements of the manuscript had been falsified, and the journal had been deceived”. This means that his work was false. GMC was able to find that this was false because they tested his theory and they never got the end result correctly like he did.

In addition to his work being false, he eventually lost his ability to practice medicine. It is clear to understand why he lost it for not only did he make a lie up, but he made people believe in his work to be true. He clearly believed that his work was true. For he is an anti-vaccine activist meaning he is against the traditional shots that are required for a lot of babies. In this test, there were many outcomes, but he still chose to write it off that he and his theory were correct.

It is important to understand that for his theory to be correct he had to advertise it before it even came out. From reading into his life, you can see that his mangoes prove his theory. What's interesting about this case is that he only chose to do the test on 12 children, what I find even more interesting is that out of the 12 of those children got a disease because of the MMR within one to two weeks after getting the shot. Now this may be interesting to some but to others. This was more of a common sense since they received the shot so the body obviously Has to take some effects. Now Dr. Andrew Wakefield on the other hand saw this as a key opportunity for his work to come true. No at the time a lot of people did believe this, since there was evidence that

made sense and was clearly noticeable, but it wasn't factual and testable for Dr. Andrew Wakefield had just written off that his work was true.

In this case, it is important to understand that he only chose to do the test on 12 people meaning that there wasn't enough test done to prove his theory. I'm sure he knew the risks that he would be taking if his work was investigated but as an activist, at the same time, it may be true that he just wanted his work to be known so he could get his name out there. Dr. Andrew Wakefield strikes fear into families. Not only was there a decline in the MMR vaccine but there were others getting sicker now because of him.

In this case, it is important to understand what the scientific attitude is. The scientific attitude was applied in this case, but it wasn't applied correctly, for the scientific attitude is a theory and observation of the natural world. In addition to this, it also must be testable and as well as flexible, in this case, yes, Dr. Andrew found evidence, but he was not willing to change over theories because of the evidence that he already had from the eight children. Dr. Andrew Wakefield had the proper observations for those who didn't get the shot wouldn't show the autism symptoms, whereas those eight that receive the shot Had parts of it in them. This is important to understand for this is part of the natural world where those who don't get something get something else instead and Dr. Andrew Wakefield wasn't flexible enough and didn't want to test more people for his stick with his 12 children that he tested on, you see it is important to understand that if this was to be proper, he should have tested on more people.

As you can see from everything that is mentioned above Andrew Wakefield, and 12 of his colleagues' cases were false. Him and his team not only affected their lives as well, but the lives of others, for they got people to believe their lies, which ultimately affected people. His

claims did not support the scientific attitude, and as well as the evidence mentioned in his reports was incorrect. Dr. Andrew Wakefield's case series were false.

Julia Belluz, a senior health correspondent stated in her article on *VOX* that “Finally, Wakefield never replicated his findings. At the very bedrock of science is the concept of falsification: A scientist runs a test, gathers his findings, and tries to disprove himself by replicating his experiment in other contexts. Only when that’s done can he know that his findings were true”. From this evidence, it shows to us that his work cannot be true for he did not follow the scientific method. He didn't provide enough tests for he took a general guess to get his result. His work is still affecting lives for even though it was untrue his popularity and impact on people's lives as an activist made his goals and result worth it even though he has lost his credibility as a scientist.

This is a significant case because it shows us that even though he was a liar he was dedicated to his work to still publish his findings even though they may not be true. This case immediately received attention, luckily to put an end to him and his work. Since he did not follow the scientific method, his work isn't able to get the same results that were in his findings. He was successfully able to worry families and the world. He put the lives of others in danger with no hesitation. Therefore the scientific attitude and method are so important.

As you can see with everything that is mentioned above you can see that this case was not just faulty and untrue but as well as harmful and damaging to the lives of innocent people. His case did not contribute to the scientific attitude for it lacked the understanding of being retestable to get the same result. As a result of his lying many children became prone to more diseases and as well as brought fear of not receiving the vaccine even though it was beneficial. In

this case the truth eventually did come out and it had to be tested many times to prove that his theory that the MMR vaccine causes autism was and is untrue.

Bibliography

“Andrew Wakefield.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 3 Aug. 2022,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrew_Wakefield.

“Julia Belluz.” *Vox*, <https://www.vox.com/authors/julia-belluz>.

McIntyre, Lee C. *The Scientific Attitude: Defending Science from Denial, Fraud, and Pseudoscience*. The MIT Press, 2020.

“A Quote by Abraham Lincoln.” *Goodreads*, Goodreads,
<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/275126-you-can-fool-some-of-the-people-all-of-the>.

Rao, T S Sathyanarayana, and Chittaranjan Andrade. “The MMR Vaccine and Autism: Sensation, Refutation, Retraction, and Fraud.” *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, Medknow Publications, Apr. 2011, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3136032/>.