



Elizabeth Hart &lt;eliz.hart25@gmail.com&gt;

## Censorship of comments re vaccination policy by The Conversation

Elizabeth Hart &lt;eliz.hart25@gmail.com&gt;

Sun, Apr 24, 2016 at 10:29 PM

To: Misha Ketchell &lt;misha.ketchell@theconversation.edu.au&gt;

Cc: julie.leask@sydney.edu.au, Raina MacIntyre &lt;r.macintyre@unsw.edu.au&gt;, Peter Charles Doherty &lt;pcd@unimelb.edu.au&gt;, Teresa Rispoli &lt;trispoli@unimelb.edu.au&gt;, Andrew Jaspan &lt;andrew.jaspan@theconversation.edu.au&gt;

### An open email to:

Mr Misha Ketchell  
Managing Editor of The Conversation

Mr Ketchell, recently I posted comments regarding the **second** dose of live measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine on an article by Julie Leask - **Vaccination objection rates aren't skyrocketing** (18 April 2016), which includes reference to the Australian Federal Government's recently enacted No Jab, No Pay law.

**All of my comments (bar the last one) have been deleted from Julie Leask's article.**

**I have also been advised by Community Manager Cory Zanoni that I have effectively been banned from making further comments on The Conversation.[1]**

**My record of activity, i.e. the record of all my comments questioning government vaccination policy on The Conversation over the past nearly four years, also appears to have been expunged, along with my profile in which I openly declare my interest in vaccination policy and the link to my website [over-vaccination.net](http://over-vaccination.net).[2]**

I have been prevented from making further comments on Julie Leask's article, and also Raina MacIntyre's recent article promoting annual flu vaccination - **Thinking about getting the 2016 flu vaccine? Here's what you need to know** (15 April 2016), and other articles on The Conversation.

**Can you please advise on what basis my comments have been censored, and why I have been banned from making further comments on The Conversation?**

Over the past nearly four years I have tried to raise serious discussion about vaccination policy and individual vaccine products on The Conversation[3], and repeatedly been hindered in this regard by people associated with lobby groups promoting coercive vaccination policies e.g. SAVN[4] and Friends of Science in Medicine[5], who aim to stifle dissent on this matter. These people seldom formally disclose their associations with coercive vaccination lobby groups e.g. Dave Hawkes (SAVN) and Sue Ieraci (Friends of Science in Medicine). Patrick Stokes' association with SAVN is not disclosed on his article **No, you're not entitled to your opinion**, published in October 2012, an omission which contravenes The Conversation's own requirement that **"Authors' funding and potential conflicts of interest must be disclosed. Failure to do so carries a risk of being banned from contributing to the site."**[6] (My emphasis.)

It is astonishing that Patrick Stokes, an administrator of SAVN, and Sue Ieraci, a member of Friends of Science in Medicine, are members of The Conversation's 'Community Council'[7] and have the ability to 'hide' (i.e. censor) citizens' comments on vaccination policy on The Conversation. It is notable that neither of these people currently disclose their association with coercive vaccination lobby groups in their profiles on The Conversation. This is an important lack of disclosure of conflict of interest.

**Mr Ketchell, in our democratic society citizens are entitled to question government-mandated medical interventions, i.e. vaccination. The Conversation's censorship of comments on this issue is an important matter of public interest relevant to the Australian Government's coercive vaccination policy, i.e. the No Jab, No Pay law, including the influence of lobby groups promoting coercive vaccination policies, e.g. SAVN and Friends of Science in Medicine.**

**The Conversation claims to be an independent website, personally endorsed by Nobel Laureate Professor Peter Doherty[8], but it seems to me to be grossly biased against any citizens legitimately raising questions about vaccination policy, and appears to actively support members of lobby groups promoting coercive vaccination policies.**

**There are now 46 doses of vaccine for children up to teenage years on the ever-increasing National Immunisation Program Schedule[9], with a *sixth* combination shot of diphtheria, tetanus and acellular pertussis**

vaccine for children being added since the implementation of the No Jab, No Pay law in January 2016, despite the fact there are known problems with the acellular pertussis component of this vaccine.[10]

The community is now being set up to be compliant to every lucrative vaccine product and revaccination in the vaccine industry's pipeline - it's time the spotlight was thrown onto the approval process for taxpayer-funded vaccine products, and the often conflicted academics who influence this process.

**New vaccine products and revaccinations are added to the taxpayer-funded vaccination schedule without consultation with the community, and with little transparency and accountability.** Many members of the vaccination committees and groups influencing vaccination policy in Australia are conflicted by their associations with the vaccine industry (e.g. the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI)[11]), or have not clarified their potential conflict of interest status (e.g. the National Centre for Immunisation Research & Surveillance (NCIRS) and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC)).

As I have argued in my comments (*most now censored*) on Julie Leask's article in relation to the arbitrary **second** dose of live MMR vaccine, the No Jab, No Pay law contravenes the obligation for legally valid consent before vaccination, as outlined in The Australian Immunisation Handbook, i.e. **"For consent to be legally valid, the following elements must be present...It must be given voluntarily in the absence of undue pressure, coercion or manipulation...It can only be given after the potential risks and benefits of the relevant vaccine, risks of not having it and any alternative options have been explained to the individual."**

**The conflict between the coercive No Jab, No Pay law and the obligation for 'legally valid consent' before vaccination, i.e. fully informed consent in the absence of undue pressure, coercion or manipulation, has not been properly addressed or resolved.**

Please note I am not making an 'anti-vaccination' argument, I am simply arguing that parents should be properly informed before each vaccination, and should not be compelled to **over**-vaccinate their child with vaccines of questionable value. There **are** questionable vaccine products and revaccinations on the schedule, e.g. the arbitrary **second** dose of live MMR vaccine (which is unlikely to be necessary in most cases due to individuals being already immune after the first dose of live MMR vaccine - immunity can be verified by an antibody titre/serological test, which should be offered as an option before the second MMR dose), and repeated revaccinations with the apparently defective acellular pertussis vaccine.[10]

**Mr Ketchell, I again ask why my comments relative to vaccination policy have been censored on The Conversation website, and why I have been banned from making further comments. It is a travesty that The Conversation is shutting down citizens' alternative perspectives on the Australian Government's coercive vaccination policy.**

I request your early response on this matter.

Sincerely  
Elizabeth Hart  
[over-vaccination.net](http://over-vaccination.net)

**Note:** This email is also being forwarded to Julie Leask, Raina MacIntyre and Peter Doherty, a Director of The Conversation, and Andrew Jaspan, Executive Director and Editor of The Conversation, and will be circulated to other parties.

References:

1. **"Your account on the The Conversation has been locked following repeated violations of our community standards, as warned about on 29/04/15."**[sic] Email from Cory Zanoni, The Conversation Community Manager, 21 April 2016.
2. My hyperlinked name in comments on The Conversation articles now links to a webpage saying "Page not found", i.e. my profile and record of activity is not accessible.
3. See list of articles on my webpage **The Conversation - a marketing arm for the university and research sector?** <https://over-vaccination.net/the-conversation-forum/>
4. Patrick Stokes outlined SAVN's support of coercive vaccination policies in his presentation to the Community Affairs Legislation Committee re Social Services Legislation Amendment (No Jab, No Pay) Bill 2015, Monday 2 November 2015. (Public Hearing Transcript). I suggest Patrick Stokes is **not** an 'expert in vaccination' and does not understand the complexity of this subject across the burgeoning range of individual vaccine products and revaccinations on the schedule.
5. Sue Ieraci, speaking on behalf of Friends of Science in Medicine, outlined FSM's support of coercive vaccination policies in her presentation to the Community Affairs Legislation committee re Social Services Legislation Amendment (No Jab, No Pay) Bill 2015, Monday 2 November 2015. (Public Hearing Transcript). I suggest Sue Ieraci is **not** an 'expert in vaccination' and does not understand the complexity of this subject across the burgeoning range of individual vaccine products and revaccinations on the schedule.
6. **Who we are** webpage. The Conversation. (As accessed 24 April 2016.)
7. **Introducing our community council webpage.** The Conversation. (As accessed 24 April 2016.)

8. **Nobel Laureate Peter Doherty's message. Hear why Peter Doherty, Nobel Laureate and former Australian of the Year, supports The Conversation.** The Conversation. (As accessed 24 April 2016.)

9. I calculate at least 46 doses of individual vaccines ie breaking down combination vaccines and including revaccinations on the general schedule for children aged from birth to 15 years ie: 4 x Hepatitis B, 6 x Diphtheria, 6 x Tetanus, 6 x Acellular pertussis, 4 x Haemophilus influenza type b, 4 x Inactivated poliomyelitis, 3 x Pneumococcal conjugate, 2 x Rotavirus (possibly 3 doses, see note b on the schedule), 1 x Meningococcal C, 2 x Measles, 2 x Mumps, 2 x Rubella, 1 x Varicella (Chickenpox), 3 x Human papillomavirus

**Total 46 doses of vaccines.** Also consider many children are being vaccinated with annual flu vaccines too, and are being set up for annual flu vaccination for life. Plus Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and 'medically at risk groups' are recommended to get annual flu vaccines plus additional Pneumococcal conjugate (13vPCV) and Pneumococcal polysaccharide (23vPPV) vaccines. Refer to the National Immunisation Program Schedule (From February 2016): [http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/internet/immunise/publishing.nsf/Content/5403D77C07E1973ACA257D49001E3775/\\$File/NIP-schedule2016.pdf](http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/internet/immunise/publishing.nsf/Content/5403D77C07E1973ACA257D49001E3775/$File/NIP-schedule2016.pdf)

10. In recent years problems have been emerging with pertussis vaccination i.e. the apparently defective acellular pertussis vaccine may actually be causing new strains of the disease to develop, and spreading the disease via vaccinated individuals. See for example: **Sharp rise in cases of new strain of whooping cough.** UNSW Australia Newsroom, 21 March 2012; and Octavia, S. et al. **Newly Emerging Clones of Bordetella pertussis Carrying prn2 and ptxP3 Alleles Implicated in Australian Pertussis Epidemic in 2008-2010.** JID 2012:205 (15 April). Brief Report; and Stacey W Martin et al. **Pertactin-Negative Bordetella pertussis Strains: Evidence for a Possible Selective Advantage.** Clin Infect Dis. (2015) 60 (2): 223-227. First published online: October 9, 2014; and Safarchi A et al. **Pertactin negative Bordetella pertussis demonstrates higher fitness under vaccine selection pressure in a mixed infection model.** Vaccine. 2015 Oct 2. pii: S0264-410X(15)01340-7 (Epub ahead of print); and Anna M Acosta et al. **Tdap Vaccine Effectiveness in Adolescents During the 2012 Washington State Pertussis Epidemic.** Pediatrics April 2015; and Bart MJ et al. **Global population structure and evolution of Bordetella pertussis and their relationship with vaccination.** MBio. 2014 Apr 22;5(2); and Octavia S et al. **Insight into evolution of Bordetella pertussis from comparative genomic analysis: evidence of vaccine-driven selection.** Mol Biol Evol. 2011 Jan;28(1):707-15. Epub 2010 Sep 10; and Lam C et al. **Selection of emergence of pertussis toxin promoter ptxP3 allele in the evolution of Bordetella pertussis.** Infect Genet Evol. 2012 Mar;12(2):492-5. Epub 2012 Jan 24; **FDA study helps provide an understanding of rising rates of whooping cough and response to vaccination.** FDA News Release, 27 November 2013; and Jason M Warfel et al. **Acellular pertussis vaccines protect against disease but fail to prevent infection and transmission in a nonhuman primate model.** PNAS, 22 October 2013

11. The Conflict of Interest document for the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation includes some brief information re members' associations with vaccine manufacturers, see this link: [http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/internet/immunise/publishing.nsf/Content/FC7BB2DC63225F8ACA257D770012DBF7/\\$File/ATAGI-conflict-interest.pdf](http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/internet/immunise/publishing.nsf/Content/FC7BB2DC63225F8ACA257D770012DBF7/$File/ATAGI-conflict-interest.pdf) I have been seeking transparency on this matter since November 2011, but only recently as brief conflict of interest information for members of ATAGI become publicly accessible, after I wrote to former Prime Minister Tony Abbott on the topic, see this webpage for a summary: <https://over-vaccination.net/letters-challenging-over-vaccination/letters-to-the-australian-prime-minister-challenging-vaccination-policy-and-practice-in-australia/letter-to-australian-prime-minister-re-vaccination-policy-in-australia/>