

Why Lies Often Stick Better Than Truth

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The Chronicle of Higher Education:

There is no good reason to believe vaccines cause autism. A 1998 paper in *The Lancet* that championed the link was immediately pilloried and later withdrawn as fraudulent. Its author, the British physician Andrew J. Wakefield, was found guilty of dishonesty and abuse of developmentally disabled children by the British General Medical Council. He has been stripped of his medical license. No other researcher has been able to replicate his work, and journals have retracted his other papers. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Academy of Sciences, and many other groups found no evidence of a link.

Yet surveys in 2002 found that as much as 53 percent of the public believed there was good evidence on both sides, as did a good number of health professionals. Politicians also bought in. In 2008 the presidential candidate Barack Obama said, “We’ve seen just a skyrocketing autism rate.

Read the whole story: [*The Chronicle of Higher Education*](#)