

**Supplementary
Submission
No 4a**

**THE PROMOTION OF FALSE OR MISLEADING HEALTH-
RELATED INFORMATION OR PRACTICES**

Name: Name Suppressed

Date Received: 12/12/2013

Partially Confidential

Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission
The Promotion of False or Misleading Health-Related Information or Practices (Inquiry)
Parliament House
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Dear Sir/Madam,

In May 2013 the Daily Telegraph, working with the Australian Sceptics lobby group, started their "No Jab No Play" campaign designed to create controversy in which to influence NSW Parliamentary Members.

The Daily Telegraph created a petition that since May 2013 has only gather 5039 signatures to date. <https://www.change.org/en-AU/petitions/nsw-state-government-and-australian-federal-government-support-our-campaign-to-stop-the-spread-of-disease-by-vaccination>

Considering that the Daily Telegraph readership covers a total audience of 4,188,000 (1) then this is a very small minority of readership that have responded to this poll yet this same poll helped influence the Parliamentary vote on mandatory vaccination in NSW.

To be openly honest, it is pretty obvious that this HCCC Committee and enquiry along with the wide scope of the Terms of Reference (ToR) are a follow-on from these previous events and lobbying campaigns by the Australian Sceptics group and the HCCC - trying to find ways to silence the Australian Vaccination Network (AVN), thus creating grave consequences for health related free speech, dissemination of ideas and debates in general throughout NSW.

I would like to call to the Committees attention a petition I started to inform this Committee that many people in NSW are incensed at the ToR, and the idea that there has even been a Committee formed with the view to censorship of free speech, when in fact common sense should have prevailed. https://secure.avaaz.org/en/petition/Do_not_give_the_NSW_HCCC_powers_of_censorship_over_public_and_individuals/?email

As I send this submission to the HCCC enquiry the petition has garnered 6350+ signatories and this has been accrued within a 3 week period as opposed to a 7 month period for the Daily Telegraph poll. These signatures have been collected by just using ordinary multimedia portals like Facebook etc. I do not have access to the large readership of 4,188,000 like The Daily Telegraph has.

By January or February 2014 this poll should have swelled to over 10,000 signatories. These 10,000 signatories should be achieved in a 3 month period compared to 5039 signatures from the 6 month Daily Telegraph poll.

I would also like to add that unlike the Australian Sceptics group - who have a few well-placed journalists on their membership list - I am not a lobby group for the medical establishment, and unlike the Daily Telegraph, I do not receive advertising revenue from drug companies. I am not a lobby group nor do I represent the AVN and I am not a member of the AVN. I do not have any financial interests in the health industry either.

I am a single unaffiliated member of the community who has an interest in complementary medicine and protecting it from the politic and influence of drug companies and medical establishment bias. I just wish to be able to discuss and debate science versus dogma (or pure fraud), relative to all sorts of topics including vaccination and I do not agree with censorship. In a free society no one should agree to censorship.

I may not agree with everyone's opinion but I will fight for their right to express their opinion no matter how distasteful I might find it. Free speech allows us to learn about issues we may have been wrong about previously or even reinforce our arguments, but with censorship this is a luxury we do not have.

I would like to leave this Committee room to ponder about the following comments from an NSNBC article (2). Please read and remember that while these doctors and professionals quoted in this article are calling for more transparency and an end to scientific fraud within the medical industry, the HCCC Committee ToR will only create less transparency (by shutting down free speech and public forums) which will only foster more scientific fraud and obfuscation of data.

“If this seems like some preposterous conspiracy theory then consider the work of Dr Peter Doshi and the independent Cochrane Collaboration which should give us pause for thought. “The current system... is one in which the meager details of clinical trials published in medical journals, often by authors with financial ties to the companies whose drugs they are writing about, is insufficient to the point of being misleading“.

*“And then there’s the even stronger position of epidemiologist Dr Ben Goldacre, as reported in The Guardian. “The decades-old industry practice of suppressing scientific evidence (and some independent researchers doing the same), leads Goldacre to declare that **nothing we know about modern medicine should be assumed to be correct**, and he makes the urgent case for forcing the release of all that pharma dark matter so scientists can re-run the numbers and work out what actually does work.”*

“Statements like this are sending shockwaves through the medical establishment, and with good reason. But as Goldacre indicates, it is an issue that has been brewing for a long time. Writing as editor of the prestigious medical journal ‘The Lancet’ in 2002, Richard Horton stated that “a study of the interactions between authors of clinical practice guidelines and the pharmaceutical industry... found serious omissions in declarations of conflicts of interest. Almost 90% of authors received research funding from or acted as consultants for a drug company. Over half had connections with companies whose drugs were being reviewed in the guideline, and the same proportion indicated that there was no formal procedure for reporting these interactions.” He also wrote in 2004 that “journals have devolved into information laundering operations for the pharmaceutical industry”.

“Clearly there is a problem. A very serious and shocking problem that goes to the core of which pharmaceutical products are safe and effective, and those which are not. And there is no doubt that consumers, policy makers and medical professionals alike have been consistently misled. Which brings me to the ‘All Trials’ initiative and Dr Peter Parry, a child and adolescent psychiatrist, and senior lecturer at the University of Queensland. All Trials is an initiative which began in the UK in January and is now attracting widespread support from the medical community there. Dr Parry is a staunch supporter and would like to see it gain traction here as well. He explains:

The ‘All Trials’ campaign calls for all clinical trials to be registered on a regulated and enforced website and the methodology and results of the trials to be published on the website so that researchers and journals can be sure of the data and the context of the data. In other words to make medical science transparent. There is a lot of detail to pin down the process and make it enforceable because voluntary and semi-voluntary systems such as www.clinicaltrials.gov just aren’t working. So the AllTrials website (3) has a full explanation on their website if you follow the link “why this matters” and then “more information”.

“Parry believes that the problem of pharmaceutical company influence on clinical data is pervasive and long standing.”

“The problem has been bad for a long time. It has been getting a little better in recent years, but only a full overhaul of the system – in other words the “AllTrials” process – can truly rectify things. I am mainly aware of my own specialty of psychiatry. In the last 3 or 4 years there has been a shift in awareness within the profession. Previously there was a collective view that the few “radicals” who were complaining about the overly cosy relationship with Pharma had a point but were exaggerating. However now I think the collective view accepts that the outspoken members of our profession have had a valid and vital point – our whole “evidence-base” for our clinical, research and teaching practice has been compromised. To what extent compromised is hard to say – and that is precisely because of the lack of transparency with the data. Some research and guidelines could be based on fully accurate scientific data – but we cannot be sure what is and what is not.”

Any legislation arising from the HCCC Committee ToR would effectively suppress public criticism of drug trials like this example below:

*“I know a professor of psychiatry who was involved in half a dozen trials of an antipsychotic medication in a developing nation. He told me four of those trials were negative and the results never published, only the positive findings from the remaining two were published. He was appalled but legally could do nothing because of the confidentiality agreement he had signed.”
(2).*

In conclusion, the spirit of these ToR before this Committee embody censorship and disallow public discussion. Please do not consent to censorship in any shape or form, valid science does not need protection.

Please take into consideration the number of people who have petitioned to express their disapproval at the scope and spirit of these ToR and this Committees direction.

Thank you for your time in this matter.

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

1/ Source: emma conducted by Ipsos MediaCT, 12 months ending Sep 2013. Print/Comp/Tab/Mob/App/PDF last 4 weeks. Total audience.

2/ <http://nsnbc.me/2013/12/08/all-trials-because-no-test-should-go-unheralded/>

3/ <http://www.alltrials.net/all-trials/>