

Newsletter 109: Journalists Misrepresenting Academic Research

My Response to the article 'Third Marker gives OK to Anti-Vac Thesis' (Loussikian K, The Australian 11 May 2016)

On the 11 May 2016 the *Australian* newspaper published yet another negatively framed article by Kylar Loussikian. In what appears to be an orchestrated series of attacks. Kylar Loussikian makes a further attempt to denigrate me personally and my research, this time by using information that was released under the Freedom of Information (FOI) act. He has used the examiner's comments that were made *in the process of assessing the PhD thesis* to make suggestions about the quality of the final research. These are comments that must be addressed **before the degree is awarded and are made to improve the quality of the final thesis**. Loussikian has misused these comments *by taking them out of context* to disparage the research and me personally. In doing so, he is also directly attacking the integrity of my independent examiners as well as the integrity of the University of Wollongong.

Why are journalists going to so much trouble to discredit my PhD thesis? A thesis that is titled "[A critical analysis of the Australian government's rationale for its vaccination policy](#)". What is it that journalists do not want the public to see with credibility? UOW followed all the required procedures in the awarding of this degree and a UOW spokesman stated in the Australian newspaper (13 January 2016) that UOW stands by this research.

Loussikian has made false and misleading comments about my research in many [articles](#). One example in this recent article, is his claim that my research "warns that global agencies including the World Health Organisation were **colluding** with the pharmaceutical industry to inappropriately push vaccination." This is incorrect. In my thesis I have provided fully referenced information showing that the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI), a board that provides advice to the World Health Organisation (WHO) on global vaccination policy, is made up of public / private partnerships that include pharmaceutical companies, biotechnology companies and the World Bank etc. Each partner in this alliance has equal

influence in the design of **global public health policies**. Here is a link to this [information in my thesis](#).

Loussikian, persists in attacking the messenger by slandering the academic process through what appears to me to be a deliberate misinterpretation of my analysis. Loussikian contacted me once in early January for my comment but I was unavailable. He has made no other attempt to get my comment for an accurate presentation of my research and nor has any other journalist. Many journalists have written negatively framed stories about my research without contacting me and now the Illawarra Mercury is presenting negatively framed stories [without authors](#) that falsely claim that they have contacted me for a comment. I have never described the information I am presenting as a 'conspiracy' and I am not presenting an 'anti-vaccination' position. I am promoting choice in vaccination.

Did you know that Australian universities are not required to **promote** student / academic research in the mainstream media? Nor are they required to correct the academic record when unqualified individuals misinterpret a student's research, or present false information. This enables organised lobby groups and unqualified academics to present their opinions on scientific subjects in the media with greater credibility, **than the academic presenting researched and fully referenced information**.

Why would anyone attend a university to complete academic research *if universities are not required to promote their research in the media so it can be accurately used in public debates for policy? This practice allows student's / academic's research to be tarnished by unqualified individuals in the media and on social media*. The presentation of my research in the media is a good case study of the problems that arise when universities are sponsored and in partnership with industry, a situation where industry can influence every aspect of the [scientific process](#) **including the promotion of academic research**. What other Australian PhD candidate, no matter how controversial their subject matter, has been attacked like this? The orchestrated attacks on my research over the last 4 years could be explained as 'astroturfing'; the practice of lobbying by false grassroots movements funded by political, corporate or other special interests, explained succinctly in this [10 min video](#).

Please see below the way in which the opinions of journalists and unqualified individuals are being [promoted by the Australian media](#) and universities, to enhance the credibility of their unsupported opinions in public debates.

Judy Wilyman PhD

Addressing the Misinformation in Loussikian's article (The Australian 11 May 2016)

Like the Skeptic/SAVN lobby groups, Loussikian, persists in attacking the academic process and misinterpreting the research instead of debating the issues. This behaviour suppresses academic debate and can be a sign of 'astroturfing'. In his article, Loussikian has misinformed the public about the information I am providing on my website [Vaccination Decisions](#) and my facebook page, [Vaccination Choice](#). These education sites are promoting **choice** in vaccination, not anti-vaccination, and this is clearly stated on my website. The debate is not about pro or anti vaccination it is about debating the risks and benefits for each vaccine.

Loussikian also states that I have criticised Paul Offit, a senior immunisation advisor to the CDC, as producing '*pseudoscience funded by the pharmaceutical companies*'. Offit has suggested that it is safe for an **infant** to have 10,000 vaccines at one time. This statement requires scientific evidence. Further, [Paul Offit](#) has not taken up the challenge to demonstrate this fact by taking multiple vaccines in his own **adult body at one time**. Here is a [10 min video](#) that describes the questionable science being used by organisations such as the US CDC, FDA and WHO in the design of government vaccination policies. Here is the link to referenced information in my thesis that shows how science can be manipulated to support a particular outcome: [Industry Influence in Research and Policy](#).

Comments by UOW Academics Promoted in the Media

Loussikian states in his article that the university 'earlier declined to provide the names of the examiners [for my thesis] suggesting it could have a detrimental effect to their physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing'. This is because academics at UOW have observed the attacks on me by journalists such as Loussikian, who have disparaged my research and the academic process with misinterpreted information.

He also quotes Alison Jones, the dean of the faculty of science, medicine, and health, as being critical of the process of awarding this PhD but he does not say *what she is critical of*. In addition, she is quoted as saying "Dr. Wilyman has 'repeated the discredited claims of a link between vaccines and autism, without providing compelling scientific evidence to support her claim'". Yet no evidence is provided to support Alison Jones's claim. She doesn't discuss the evidence in my thesis she merely states that it is not 'compelling' as if the act of **saying these words** makes it true. This is not scrutinising the science or debating the evidence.

Professor Alison Jones is also one of many UOW academics who have voiced support for the government's vaccination schedule on the [UOW website](#), and these views have been promoted in the media and on websites. The opinion promoted to the public by these UOW academics has been formed **without addressing the in-depth peer-reviewed medical literature in my PhD thesis - also published on the UOW website**. This is a case of the *opinions* of academics, *who have not specialised in vaccination policy*, being promoted without addressing the **in-depth research provided in a doctoral thesis that specialises in vaccination policy**.

[Email Judy Wilyman](http://us8.forward-to-friend.com/forward?u=f20605fde3732e41929f4a3f2&id=6debf4783c&e=fec8337d3c) | [http://us8.forward-to-friend.com/forward?
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