

MMR, the media and risk

 blogs.lse.ac.uk/polis/2007/07/18/mmr-the-media-and-risk/

2007-7-18

One of my least proud moments as a programme editor was the week that the MMR vaccine row broke with Andrew Wakefield's revelations in the BMJ. In one week our newsroom went from headlining his allegations on the Monday to dismissing them on the Friday. But by then the damage was done. A few weeks later my brother told me that he wasn't going to have his new baby vaccinated with the MMR single jab. I think it is fair to say that the media is partly responsible for children who have died from measles since then.

So it wasn't good to see the [Observer](#) raising the whole scare again in advance of Andrew Wakefield's [appearance](#) at the GMC. They have subsequently [back-tracked](#) from their stance but again, the damage has been done. People remember the headlines not the corrections. For a full critique see this [blog](#) from the [Science Media Centre](#), a group which lobbies for a more scientific approach to issues like MMR.

POLIS is running a seminar on reporting risk on October 17th – contact us if you want to come at: polis@lse.ac.uk

- Copyright © 2014 London School of Economics and Political Science