



Science in the Service of Autism

Autistica's response to the General Medical Council's findings in the case of Dr Andrew Wakefield

The findings of the General Medical Council in the case of Dr. Andrew Wakefield and colleagues has served to underline the importance of carrying out research in a proper manner, according to the UK's leading charitable funder of biomedical autism research.

Hilary Gilfoy, Chief Executive of Autistica, said: 'We owe it to the many people affected by autism to ensure that all medical research into its causes and treatment is properly conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines, is peer reviewed for robustness and methodology before it commences and that findings are subject to further peer review before they are published and where necessary to replication thereafter. It is particularly important that sample sizes are sufficiently large for statistically significant conclusions to be drawn. Only then can families be confident that findings can be trusted and acted upon.'

She went on: 'Autism has been a fertile breeding ground for poorly planned and executed research and for 'treatments' based on anecdotal evidence. Families affected by a condition whose causes are still largely unknown are desperate for answers. It is simply unfair to them that what are really unproven hypotheses continue to be presented to them as though they were the outcomes of robust research.'

For further information, please contact:

Hilary Gilfoy, Chief Executive, Autistica 01491 614509 / 07973224240

Paul Burden, Director of Communications, Autistica 01628 483481 / 07768 011333