



VACCINE TRUTH

THE REAL VICTIM OF ANTI-VACCINE LIES

story - Steve Mirsky / photography - Juan García Auni6n

*Kent State University's College of Public Health, Epidemiologist Tara Smith talks with Steve Mirsky on vaccines, recent preventable measles outbreaks and her 2017 article "Vaccine Rejection and Hesitancy: A Review and Call to Action" published in the *Open Forum Infectious Diseases Journal*.*

STEVE MIRSKY: Why did you feel compelled to do this research and write this paper?

TARA SMITH: I was a distinguished lecturer for the *American Society for Microbiology*, and I would go to different branch meetings throughout the various states and give lectures.

One of the lectures I gave routinely was a lecture on science denial and in particular vaccines — and what microbiologists could do about it. I had people asking me after every lecture, "Have you ever written anything about this? Is there anything in the published literature that I could turn to?" And there really wasn't anything specifically for people who were not physicians.

SM: And what are the things that other people can do?

TS: I think the most important thing to do is to just get yourself or your child immunized, and then to post online about it, for example, "My kid got their vaccines today." Then go on and say that the next day they had a little bit of a fever, or that they were a little grumpy, or maybe they didn't have anything at all, they were just fine. Normalizing immunisation and vaccines instead of making them into an underground conspiracy theory

that you only hear about when people have had a bad reaction. I'm talking here about the normal, everyday vaccines that people have very little reaction to, that we don't hear about.

Another thing is just talking to your legislators. A lot of the laws regarding vaccines are set at the local and the state level. If you get to know some of your politicians and see where they stand on some of these issues, you can write to them about your concerns about vaccines and about reducing vaccine exemptions in your state. People don't realise that most states still have exemptions for philosophical or religious beliefs, in addition, to medical exemptions.

You can write letters to the editor. Those are still influential, the online op eds are widely shared, especially if they're subject is anti-vaccine related. Try to do something to counter some of those attitudes, just write to your »

REFLECTION

words - Sharon Rowland

In reflection, a number of issues surfaced during my repackaging of Steve Mirsky's article on vaccine rejection. These issues and subsequent solutions included:

**#1:
An imbalance between the main photograph and the heading area.**

In line with Reep's (2011, p. 124) balance principle, I needed to create a suitable amount of text weight on the right page to complement the main photograph. Breaking down the text into a mirror version of the child's body I arranged the heading area to reflect the child's head, the main body text mirroring the child's shoulders and below. I then made all of the text unjustified to emphasise the overall effect.

**#2:
Alignment and consistency issues.**

Through the introduction of a visual framework grid (Anderson 2016, p. 263) and limiting typefaces to Myriad Pro and Utile, alignment across pages and visual aesthetics was achieved (Reep 2011, p. 125).

**#3:
Text hierarchy insufficient.**

Even with text-based hierarchy in place, I found the heading area was not attracting the readers attention away from the main photograph. To ensure the readers eyes moved from the photograph to the heading area and then below, I added three display lines and additional white space to create a visual start and stop scenario (Cousins 2014, p. 4).

**#4:
Confusing article title.**

The article title "Vaccine Rejection: Truth and Consequences" confused our target audience. I revised the heading to "Vaccine Truth: The Real Victim of Anti-Vaccine Lies", to provide a more realistic and enticing interpretation of the article content (Stretch 2015).

**#5:
Unprofessional language**

The speech expressed by Tara Smith was amateurish. I removed a number of colloquialised sayings to ensure that the text would appear more scholarly, and consequently be given more weight by its reader.

References

Anderson, PV 2016, *Technical communication: a reader-centered approach*, Ninth edition, Cengage Learning, Boston.

Cousins, C 2014, *The designer's guide to visual punctuation*, Design Shack, Compact Creative, viewed 10 April 2020, <<https://designshack.net/articles/graphics/the-designers-guide-to-visual-punctuation/>>.

Reep, DC 2011, *Document design*, Longman, Boston.

Stretch, R 2015, *Plain language: how to simplify content for a better reader experience*, Zapier, viewed 12 April 2020, <<https://zapier.com/blog/plain-language/>>.