# Today’s piece was prepared by Tyler Tate, MD based on a story from CBSNEWS entitled: *Vaccines and autism: a new scientific review*

<http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-31727_162-20049118-10391695.html>

In this article CBS reporter Sharyl Attkisson discusses her recent interview with researcher Helen Ratajczak PhD author of a controversial 2011 article in the Journal of Immunotoxicology entitled "Theoretical aspects of autism: Causes--A review.” The CBS article begins unabashedly with the statement “For all those who've declared the autism-vaccine debate over - a new scientific review begs to differ.” It then proceeds to quote segments of Rataiczak’s review that hypothesize a link between different type of vaccines and the autism epidemic occurring in the western world. Specifically Attkisson highlights Rataiczak’s hypothesis that human DNA used in vaccine production is becoming integrated into the vaccine recipient’s neural tissue through homologous recombination - causing both deleterious mutations in genes involved in neuronal and mitochondrial development as well as an ongoing inflammatory process and “vaccine-induced encephalitis.”

While this article does make a few good points, it is rife with assumptions and biased reporting. The overarching theme of Attkisson’s piece – that unproven does not *automatically* equal disproven, is valid. However, many of the bold statements made in the article go far beyond that healthy level of skepticism. For example, Rataiczak’s theory of human DNA playing a role in autism is backed by no data other than minor, intermittent increases in the reported incidence of autism around the time human cell lines were beginning to be used to culture vaccine viruses. It commits the age-old fallacy of equating temporal relationships with cause and effect. In summary, while everyone is entitled to an opinion regarding the manifold “causes” of autism, positing a link between two unrelated processes without any hard data to back you up is simply bad science. The following resources can assist parents:

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND VACCINES & AUTISM

Immunization Action Coalition: [www.immunize.org/catg.d/p2068.pdf](http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p2068.pdf) *- An acclaimed author and pediatrician discusses parents most common questions about vaccines and autism*

American Academy of Pediatrics <http://www2.aap.org/new/autisminfomain.html> - *Vaccine safety information from the American Academy of Pediatrics*

King County <http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/communicable/immunization/safety.aspx#autism> - Guide for health providers from King County WA addressing retracted fraudulent research

And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!