

Toronto Star's take on vaccines ignores science, spreads irrational fear

The Toronto Star, Canada's highest-circulation daily newspaper, has built a reputation for excellent investigative reporting, including justly celebrated exposes of Toronto Mayor Rob Ford.

But now that reputation is in tatters, due to an evidence-free “investigation” of the health risks of the vaccine Gardasil, which immunizes against the dangerous human papillomavirus. The Star's Feb. 5 piece, ominously headlined “A wonder drug's dark side,” exploited heart-wrenching family anecdotes of illness and death to undermine a vast library of scientific studies proving the vaccine to be safe.

Worse, the Star responded to an uproar over the article by scientific and medical experts by smearing and demeaning critics — until the paper's publisher finally acknowledged publicly that the story was wrong: “**We failed in this case.** We let down. And it was in the management of the story at the top,” he told a radio audience on Feb. 11. On February 13, the Star added a subheadline to the online version of the article, acknowledging the uproar and stating in part, “There is no scientific medical evidence of any ‘dark side’ of this vaccine.”

Read full original article: [How a major newspaper bungled a vaccine story, then smeared its critics](#)