

Why does science denialism persist, and how is it harming society?

The March issue of *National Geographic* raises many intriguing questions about the world we live in today. It also has a particular resonance for me as a former science reporter. Its title is: The War on Science. And the sub-headline reads:

- Climate change does not exist
- Evolution never happened
- The moon landing was fake
- Vaccinations can lead to autism
- Genetically modified food is evil.

Over the years, I have had my share of altercations with angry people on the last two items, some even quite recently. In the early 2000s, I started writing articles casting doubt on the original paper published by Andrew Wakefield and his colleagues in the British medical journal *The Lancet* claiming the combined measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) childhood vaccine could cause autism.

More recently, I wrote in my daily column My Take defending genetically modified food after millions of people marched against the biotechnology and the modified seeds giant Monsanto.

As *National Geographic* puts it, “doubting science has consequences”.

“The people who believe vaccines cause autism – often well educated and affluent, by the way – are undermining ‘herd immunity’ to such diseases as whooping cough and measles.

“The anti-vaccine movement has been going strong since ... *The Lancet* published a study in 1998 linking a common vaccine to autism. The journal later retracted the study, which was thoroughly discredited. But the notion of a vaccine-autism connection has been endorsed by celebrities and reinforced through the usual Internet filters.

Read full, original article: [Why science stands supreme in the face of so much ignorance](#)