

## Viewpoint: Sri Lanka's glyphosate-kidney disease scare illustrates why science, not politics, should dictate public health policy

On Feb. 4, the [American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)] [announced that](#) “two public health researchers who battled powerful corporate interests to uncover the deadly effects of industrial herbicides”....were the latest winners of [its 2019 [Scientific Freedom and Responsibility Award](#).]

The AAAS press release said Sarath Gunatilake and Channa Jayasumana, both from Sri Lanka, had “faced death threats and claims of research misconduct while working to determine the cause of a kidney disease epidemic....an herbicide called glyphosate....”

....Arguments raged between those who defended the duo and others who demanded evidence that glyphosate, best known as the key ingredient in the widely used and controversial herbicide Roundup, causes chronic kidney disease....Two days later, the [AAAS changed its mind](#): “We are taking steps to reassess the 2019 Award for Scientific Freedom and Responsibility, after concerns were voiced by scientists and members...”

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What happens when some scientists become campaigners for environmental conservation or public health? Their causes may be laudable, but they must still be held to the same standards of rigor and scrutiny....The National Academy of Sciences Sri Lanka, an independent body, [said](#)....“We are not aware of any scientific evidence from studies in Sri Lanka or abroad showing that [kidney disease] is caused by glyphosate....”

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There are no quick fixes to complex problems....Socially engaged scientists are to be saluted — as long as they are driven by evidence and debate.

**Read full, original article:** [Glyphosate's kidney disease link: More science, less politics](#)