

Viewpoint: Journal Pediatrics reneges on its commitment to print response to botched article claiming GMOs are harmful to children. Here's what they censored

A lot has been said about the journal *Pediatrics* December 2023 Clinical Report on “[Use of Genetically Modified Organism \(GMO\)-Containing Food Products in Children](#)”. The poor scholarship and citation bias are alarming, and the bias against safe technology is clear.

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## Use of Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) Products in Children **FREE**

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Views



PDF



When I wrote to editor-in-chief Dr. Lewis. First, he indicated that I was invited to submit a response to the article that would be posted below the article on its website. I submitted my response, and it was not published on the site. My guess is that it illuminated the bankruptcies of the article in a manner that ran counter to the authors', editor's and journal's narrative.

So I'll publish my comment here.

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Dear Pediatrics Readership,

The article by Abrams et al. represents a stunning example of how misinformation spreads- even through a credible conduit. *Pediatrics* is a respected journal, so when a paper implies a technology is dangerous, physicians and the general public take note. That's good. But if the message runs counter to the scientific consensus built from tens of thousands of studies, regulatory approvals, and 50 years of use, it confuses the issue and breaks trust for those of us

that communicate science. Worse, it breaks the credibility of Pediatrics, a journal that needs to lead scientific discourse.

As an editor, reviewer and scientific author, I was shocked by the disconnect between this work and the broad scientific consensus. The article lacks scholarly rigor, suffers from omission, and seeks to create a narrative rather than correctly communicate evidence. While there are many problems with this work, some of the most glaring problems are:

1.  
**Failed Central Premise.** There is no direct evidence that glyphosate causes cancer at dietary or occupational exposures. The IARC, other agencies within the World Health Organization, and dozens of international regulators stand by this conclusion. This is not stated in the review.
2.  
**Citation Bias.** Cited evidence comes from a meta-analysis by Zhang et al., 2019, which showed a relatively slight increase in risk of a family of rare blood cancers. Critics indicate that this work compared disparate datasets to find an association at only the highest exposure and time point (Kabat et al., 2021). Abrams et al. also cite a single paper by perennially incorrect authors that genetically engineered crops (“GMOs”) are not safe (Hillbeck et al., 2016). The largest study of 54,000 applicators over decades shows no association with non-Hodgkin lymphoma, but the authors curiously fail to cite that (Andriotti et al., 2018).
3.  
**Omission of Limitations.** While the cited research articles are clear about critical limitations of the studies, these authors cite the same work as conclusive evidence of the dangers of glyphosate.
4.  
**Confusing Hazard and Risk.** The authors continually conflate detection with risk. The dose makes the poison and analytical chemistry techniques can detect concentrations orders of magnitude below physiological relevance.
5.  
**Logical Fallacy.** The authors continually make the argument from ignorance, stating that “more study is needed” when the crops and herbicide have been massively studied, and risks and benefits are well described.

These are just several of the problems with this work. Many independent scientists and physicians have criticized the work online, so multiple dissections are available. While it is impossible to

**know intent, the language used and messaging seems highly motivated, like almost a commercial for organic crop production.**

**We remain open to the idea that genetic engineering and associated chemistries could carry undue risk. But that conclusion comes from evidence leading to consensus, not cherry-picked and assembled morsels that manufacture risk in a biased narrative**

**[Here is a response by Kevin Folta et al. to the Pediatrics article.](#)**



# **Are children and pregnant women risking their health eating “GMO” foods? The American Association of Pediatrics says ‘yes’. The real question: Is the AAP endangering vulnerable?**

Andrea Love, Jessica Steier, Kevin Folta, Nicole Keller | January 18,



The authors are invited to join me in discussion on the Talking Biotech Podcast anytime to discuss the work.

Kevin M. Folta is a professor, keynote speaker and podcast host. Follow Professor Folta on X [@kevinfolta](https://twitter.com/kevinfolta)

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