

## Editorial

### “Tell me who your friends are ...”

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#### Abstract

When the Mikaeloff *et al.* study was announced, everybody (myself included) understood that the cases would be the 472 MS-diagnosed children in the “KIDMUS” cohort—an alarming number of children because pediatric MS is not a recognized medical condition. Therefore, it would be interesting to know why Mikaeloff *et al.* retained only 143 (less than one third) of these 472 children in their study.

There were a number of reasons to be highly suspicious of the validity of this study by Mikaeloff *et al.* besides *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine* publishing this problematic investigation and making it available without cost. Was it really necessary to publish an accompanying editorial touting this study under the fallacious pretext of “science”?

To conclude, Mikaeloff *et al.*’s investigation failed to answer the question which triggered its planning and execution, and was perfectly summarized by Tardieu—one of its co-authors—in 2004: Why, in a period where the main change in environment was vaccination against hepatitis B, did the 1990s show a burst of pediatric MS, a disease extremely rare in that age group and whose overall epidemiology, anyway, has normally been quite stable? To be more precise, why, following this vaccination campaign, did the KIDMUS cohort show a 25-fold increase in the frequency of pediatric MS as compared to previous records? A question strangely consistent with a more general one: “Why, as compared to the latest record prior to the vaccination campaign, did the widely accepted estimation of MS cases in the French population show an increase from about 25,000 at baseline in 1993 to the current 80,000-90,000?” To say nothing about this second interesting question: “Whatever its real cause, why did such an alarming situation not trigger from the French authority any investigation other than that of Mikaeloff *et al.*?”

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**Conflicts of interest:** Dr. Girard works as an independent consultant for the pharmaceutical industry, including (at least until recently) the manufacturers of the hepatitis vaccine and some of their competitors.

**Keywords:** Hepatitis B vaccine, medical fraud, study methodology, Multiple Sclerosis (MS), KIDMUS cohort, Agence Française de Sécurité Sanitaire des Produits de Santé (AFSSAPS)

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