

April 17, 2017

Dear Dr. Tovey,

We have been raising concerns about the Cochrane review of HPV vaccination (“Prophylactic vaccination against human papillomaviruses to prevent cervical cancer and its precursors” by Marc Arbyn, Andrew Bryant, Pierre PL Martin-Hirsch, Lan Xu, Cindy Simoens and Lauri Markowitz (<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD009069.pub2/full>) since December 2012, when we first notified the Cochrane Gynaecological, Neuro-oncology & Orphan Cancer Group (CGNOCG) of various problematic aspects in its report.

In particular, we informed the CGNOCG of the undeclared conflicts of interest of authors, and submitted a number of proposals to clarify the methodology and objectives of the protocol. All our correspondence (emails and letters) can be found in the Annex to this letter.

It is now almost five years since we first raised concerns and the review has still not yet been published. However, we have learned that as long ago as December 2014, the first author of the Cochrane review, Marc Arbyn, had already disseminated intermediate results at conferences, even stating that they were positive and in favor of vaccination.

Would you please let us know why a review of the HPV vaccination has still not yet been published?

Your explanation of this troublesome delay is now quite urgent given the constantly increasing pressure on practitioners and health authorities to generalize this vaccination as well as to alter recommendations for the number and selection of HPV vaccines as well as the populations to reach. A most recent example is the appeal, by a group of specialists, to candidates for the presidency in France (see appendix), where the information put forward as “evidence” comes exclusively from observational studies.

It is clearly important and necessary for the Cochrane Collaboration to make public the latest developments about the review of HPV vaccination. Only when a review on HPV vaccination prepared by individuals with NO conflicts of interest will be made publically available, will it be possible to have an objective and rigorous perspective about issues currently debated on the basis of mere speculations— albeit masked without qualification as “scientific evidence.”

We remain ready to respond to any questions you may have and we look forward to news from you about your plans.

Sincerely,

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