

## **Vaccination and Autism-Related Risks**

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In recent years, the potential risk of autism has been a focal point in discussions about vaccines and their side effects. Other concerns, such as the belief that vaccines weaken immune function, also exist, but the autism myth remains particularly widespread (DeStefano & Shimabukuro, 2019; Hausman, Lawrence, Marmagas, Fortenberry, & Dannenberg, 2018). This misconception likely traces back to a 1998 Lancet article, which was later retracted due to significant issues with quality and rigor. Dispelling such myths is essential, as vaccine hesitancy can have wide-reaching impacts on community health, particularly when doubts regarding autism are not evidence-based.

Substantial evidence shows that vaccination does not increase autism risk. For example, a cohort study in Denmark analyzed data from over 650,000 children and found no link between the measles, mumps, rubella (MMR) vaccine and autism (Hviid, Hansen, Frisch, & Melbye, 2019). Similarly, a 2015 study with over 95,000 U.S. children reported the same findings (Jain et al., 2015). While vaccines may cause side effects, such as allergic reactions (DeStefano & Shimabukuro, 2019), autism is not one of them.

DeStefano and Shimabukuro (2019) caution that enduring vaccine myths continue to cause hesitation, leading to potential delays in vaccination that may negatively affect the health of both individual children and communities. Education is key to countering these misconceptions, with healthcare professionals and informed advocates promoting accurate information about vaccine safety.

## **References**

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