

Real Time Ethics – How a failure of ethics hurts us

When ethics are ignored, Canadians can be lulled into accepting harms and harming others.

As kindhearted as Canadians are, our history also includes scapegoating and harming fellow Canadians. (Japanese Canadians in WWII is just one example.) Where were our ethics then? Where are our ethics today when we engage with policies that have failed and may have even increased harms?

Recent events are deeply concerning: On April 22, 2022, 1) a University of Toronto “study” was published, 2) thirteen media outlets nearly simultaneously released¹ the “findings” of that “study”, and 3) our Canadian government was quick to use those “findings” to continue to skirt the democratic process and to justify its discriminatory practices of the last twenty-six months. *It is clear that these contentious policies and practices have failed to resolve the COVID issue and very likely have caused harm to the public they are meant to protect.*²

Many ethical failures are evident in the very fact of the CMAJ publication of the recent Fisman et al. (2022) article³ and how it has subsequently been used.

Problematic science: The science of the “study” is highly questionable. Multiple scientific shortcomings of the paper have been explained by eminently qualified scientists and researchers.^{4,5,6} The response section of the CMAJ paper is full of significant critiques⁷ – including one by Richard Schabas, MD, MHSc., FRCPS, former Chief Medical Officer of Health Ontario (1987-1997).

Problematic language and presentation: The presentation (i.e. “spin”) of the article and its use of language and concepts should be *alarming* to anyone who recognizes the power of media to influence public opinion and is aware of the ongoing use of *behavioral engineering*^{8,9} (yes, by definition *it is propaganda*¹⁰ *in which we are both players and being played!*). How aware is Dr. Fisman that his use of language, exaggerated modelling, and (illogical) ideas are unduly scaring the public¹¹ and essentially turning us against each other? How aware are we of how we are impacted by media messaging?

Problematic conflicts of interests: Conflicts of interests need to be explored. It is no secret that David Fisman has financial conflicts of interest with COVID vaccine manufacturers, teachers unions, WE Charity, etc. that may seriously bias his findings.¹² The partnership the Canadian Medical Association has with Pfizer – designed to educate doctors!¹³ – is *buried* in archives. This conflict of interest, in place at least since 2009, will *bias* which articles are chosen and how they published its journal (CMAJ).

Abdication of responsibility by CMAJ: The fact of its publication by CMAJ, a medical journal that shapes Canadian health policy, is deeply, deeply troubling. CMAJ has failed to encourage multiple perspectives through transparency and open respectful dialogue. (This is missing everywhere!) If anything, the CMAJ has an obligation to uphold scientific integrity and the public trust. Unfortunately, the CMAJ, the Canadian Medical Association, and other health regulatory agencies are not alone in this abdication of responsibility. (In the US, the FDA abdicated its own responsibility by shutting out its own experts.¹⁴)

This much is clear: the COVID control measures of the past two years have undermined every single social determinate of health (food and housing security, human connection and community, meaningful work, access to quality education and healthcare). *These policies have harmed the health and well-being of Canadians.*¹⁵ These coercive policies and mandates have thrived on censorship and on divisive

political and public messaging to promote fear, confusion, hatred, and alienation (and compliance). *Sadly, the politicians, media, and regulatory agencies seem unable or unwilling to look at these ethical failings.*

Conflicts of interest (especially those unacknowledged), lack of full transparency with scientific data, and ad hominem attacks and other disrespectful behaviour, do not promote the search for truth and the development of ethically justifiable policies that keep our society safe, democratic, and prosperous.

It seems it is up to us ordinary conscientious Canadians to do anything about it.

It is up to you and me to notice that things don't make sense.

It is up to you and me to notice the harms (beyond the virus) of the last two years.

It is up to you and me to recognize that giving up our privacy, our critical thinking, our freedom of thought, of association, of movement, of conscience, and our bodily autonomy is about giving control to those who profit from our compliance.

It is up to you and me to refuse to fear, scapegoat, or hate our fellow human beings.

It is up to you and me to connect with each other, to live our values, and to insist that our voices and values are heard in any deliberation of matters that so significantly affect our lives, our health, our well-being – and that so significantly affect how we think about and treat our neighbors.

Democracy means rule of the people, which involves more than just voting once every four or five years. Each one of us has not just a right but a duty to examine our conscience, speak up about our deeply held values and act in such a way to shape Canada into a country that respects and cares for each of its citizens equally. This article by Fisman et al did not promote such a philosophy and thus is deeply flawed and potentially harmful, and the CMAJ must take responsibility for publishing it.

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¹ Nakedemperor: A picture is worth a thousand words, 28 April 2022, https://nakedemperor.substack.com/p/a-picture-is-worth-a-thousand-words-1fc/comments?token=eyJ1c2VyX2lkIjo0MDY2Njk5MkIjOjE0MzY2OTU0LCJpc3MiOiJwdWltNjAy-MTY1MTE1MzM1NCwiZXhwIjoxNjUxMTU2OTU0LCJpc3MiOiJwdWltNjAy-Mzczliwic3ViljoicG9zdC1yZWJdGlviIj9.uXGhUF1KsN82khtO3VoxprS_RNRcjrTnZx07zb949c&s=r

² Kevin Bardosh, et al: The Unintended Consequences of COVID-19 Vaccine Policy: Why Mandates, Passports, and Segregated Lockdowns May Cause more Harm than Good, 1 February 2022
https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4022798

³ Fisman et al: Impact of population mixing between vaccinated and unvaccinated subpopulations on infectious disease dynamics: implications for SARS-CoV-2 transmission, 22 April 2022
<https://www.cmaj.ca/content/194/16/E573>

⁴ Dr. Byram Bridle, PhD: Fiction designed to promote hatred, 26 April 2022, https://viralimmunologist.substack.com/p/fiction-disguised-as-science-to-promote?token=eyJ1c2VyX2lkIjozNzI2NzUwNSwicG9zdF9pZC16NTI4MzY0MTAsIl8iOiJldkxSWiIjIm-1hdCl6MTY1MTAyOTM3MSwiZXhwIjoxNjUxMTU2OTU0LCJpc3MiOiJwdWltNTkyMjE0liwic3ViljoicG9zdC1yZWJdGlviIj9.Qq0XD6T0r0slxhuTzDA7_AfjeoJUK20JEfcjrlS0_FQ&s=r

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- ⁶ OCLA Statement on CMAJ Fisman et al: Article Claiming Disproportionate Infection Risk from Unvaccinated Population, and on Negligent Media Reporting, 27 April 2022
<https://ocla.ca/ocla-statement-on-cmaj-fisman-et-al/>
- ⁷ <https://www.cmaj.ca/content/194/16/E573/tab-e-letters>
- ⁸ Health Advisory and Recovery Team: The 'weaponization' of behavioural psychology, 20 May 2021,
<https://www.hartgroup.org/behavioural-psychology/>
- ⁹ Dr. Gary Sidley: The nudge: ethically dubious and ineffective, 1 March 2022, <https://brownstone.org/articles/the-nudge-ethically-dubious-and-ineffective/>
- ¹⁰ Ryan Matters: The psychology and history of manipulation: 6 lessons from the master of propaganda, 8 May 2022, <https://www.technocracy.news/the-psychology-and-history-of-manipulation-6-lessons-from-the-master-of-propaganda/>
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<https://torontosun.com/news/provincial/ontarios-science-table-head-reveals-david-fisman-conflict-of-interest-timing>
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- ¹⁴ Dr. Marty Makary, MD, MPH: FDA shuts out its own experts in authorizing another vaccine booster, 3 April 2022
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