

Uni accepts thesis on vaccine 'conspiracy'

EXCLUSIVE

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The University of Wollongong has accepted a PhD thesis from a prominent anti-vaccination activist that warns that global agencies such as the World Health Organisation are colluding with the pharmaceutical industry in a massive conspiracy to spruik immunisation.

Judy Wilyman, the convener of Vaccination Decisions and Vaccination Choice, submitted the thesis late last year, concluding Australia's vaccination policy was not a result of independent assessment but the work of pharmaceutical industry pressure on the WHO.

The WHO convened a "secret emergency committee" funded by drug firms to "orchestrate" hysteria relating to a global swine flu pandemic in 2009, Ms Wilyman said in her thesis.

"The swine flu pandemic of 2009 was declared by a secret WHO committee that had ties to pharmaceutical companies that stood to make excessive profits

from the pandemic," she wrote.

Several medical researchers and public health advocates have slammed the PhD thesis — to be awarded through the university's School of Humanities — with some calling for it to be sent to the university's academic board for review.

Ms Wilyman has been the subject of controversy for several years, most notably falsely linking vaccination with autism and questioning whether a family was paid to use their young daughter's death to promote vaccines.

In October, she circulated an interview on her Vaccination Choice Facebook page in which anti-vaccination campaigner Sherri Tenpenny suggested Nazi scientists had "infiltrated" new medication research and were working to make "everybody on the planet sicker".

Senior immunology academic John Dwyer, spokesman for the Friends of Science in Medicine, said he would write to the university and express his concerns.

"The candidate (Ms Wilyman) has endorsed a conspiracy theory where all sorts of organisations with claimed vested interests are putting pressure on WHO to hoodwink the world into believing that vaccines provide more benefits than they cause harm," Professor Dwyer said.

"Many well-established concepts in science are being challenged in this theses with no data to support the conclusions provides and while the candidate has been controversial for some time with her anti-vaccination stance, the important issue is how a leading university has allowed this theses to go for review and for her to be given one of the highest degrees a university can award.

"I'd like to see the academic board ask for a review, for a please explain, from the faculty and the supervisor."

The thesis was supervised by Brian Martin, a professor of social sciences at the university with a long history of supporting controversial PhD candidates.

Another of Professor Martin's students was Michael Primero, associated with Medical Veritas, a self-described journal of "truth in health science" that alleged the Rockefeller Foundation had declared a war on consciousness through the imposition of musical tuning standards.

Professor Martin dismissed concerns about the paper, saying they were "not genuine concerns about quality and probity but instead part of a campaign to denigrate viewpoints they oppose".

Ms Wilyman's thesis cited a 27-year-old paper that claimed there was no clear link that human papillomavirus infection is causally related to cervical cancer, despite more recent work suggesting 70 per cent of cervical cancer is related to HPV.

"The promotional campaigns for HPV vaccine misrepresented the risk of HPV infections and cervical cancer to women in different countries," Ms Wilyman wrote.

"This was done in order to

EXTRACTS FROM JUDY WILYMAN'S PHD THESIS

There is no stringent monitoring of adverse events or evaluation of the effectiveness of vaccines in the population that would provide meaningful data on their effects in the population

WHO is perceived to be out of touch with global communities and it is controlled by the interests of corporations and the World Bank

The diseases for which vaccines are recommended have not been demonstrated to be a serious risk to the majority of children in Australia

The promotional campaigns for HPV vaccine misrepresented the risk of HPV infections and cervical cancer to women in different countries. This was done in order to create a market for the vaccine.

The 'Swine Flu' pandemic of 2009 was declared by a secret WHO committee that had ties to pharmaceutical companies that stood to make excessive profits from the pandemic

— JUDY WILYMAN

Nazi scientists took off their business suits and put on a white coat ... there is a global conspiracy ... to make everybody on the planet sicker

— SHERRI TENPENNY, IN A VIDEO WILYMAN POSTED TO VACCINATION CHOICE, HER OFFICIAL FACEBOOK PAGE.



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create a market for the vaccine."

The paper included figures showing the incidence of cervical cancer separated by developed or developing regions, which appear to incorrectly exclude China, North Africa and western Asia. Public Health Association of Australia chief executive Michael Moore said it was important not to "lightly dismiss a PhD" that had been the subject of half a decade of work.

"However, this PhD is based on the concept of undone science, implying there is not enough research about the issue or that the research is inappropriately funded," said Professor Moore, the incoming president of the World Federation of Public Health Associations.

"On the contrary, the vast majority of research in Australia, including through the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance, is government-funded and the overwhelming consensus of academics supports the efficacy of vaccination."

Orthopedic surgeon and vaccination campaigner John Cunningham said Ms Wilyman's understanding of the immune system was "flawed and oversimplified", and the thesis "had been produced within a vacuum and without an appreciation of medical science".

The university's vice-chancellor, Paul Wellings, has repeatedly declined to answer questions about Ms Wilyman's research but a spokesman said the university stood by it.

"UOW ensures research is undertaken according to strict ethical and quality standards and supports researchers' academic freedom of thought and expression," he said.

"UOW does not restrict the subjects into which research may be undertaken just because they involve public controversy or because individuals or groups oppose the topic or the findings."

UOW declined to name external examiners who approved the thesis.

When contacted, Ms Wilyman said she was busy.

The Australian 13 Jan. 2016