The Danger of RFK Jr. And The ACIP Transcript

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RFK Jr. backlash and ACIP shakeup

R. F. K. Jr. has always been a controversial figure and that's putting it mildly. However, his actions over the past few weeks have been making headlines for all the wrong reasons.

Today, Wednesday, June 25th, the CDC's Advisory Council on Immunization Practices is holding a meeting after a shakeup that has triggered immense backlash from scientists, doctors, and patient advocacy groups.

It's time to take a closer look at the events that have been happening over the past several weeks, how this can be traced to RFK's underlying understanding of disease, controversy around the ACIP appointments, why they've been controversial at best, dangerous at worst, and why it's been giving physicians chest pain as social media influences a ton of material.

Welcome back everyone to the Jaffercast. I am your host Dr. Mark Papadakis, nobody particularly special, just another freaking AR doctor. It's past time we discuss the elephant in the room.

The room being the House of Medicine and the Elephant being RFK Jr. Over the last three weeks, the departments under his watch have come under fire from physicians and various advocacy groups for his decision to fire all 17 members of the Advisory Council on Immunization Practices, or ACIP for short.

Instead, he's installed now several members without proper vetting and with significant conflicts of interest. Also, this comes at a time when the NIH has terminated guidance on HIV, at the time where a vaccine for HIV is just at our doorstep.

So why does R. F. K. Jr. keep pushing the same rhetoric about vaccines and illness? He has constantly stated that healthy individuals do not get sick, and healthy children do NOT die.

Why illness happens: miasma vs. germ theory

For many, it's an obvious lie. We all know people, ourselves included, that get sickness even though they can be the picture of perfect health. To find out why, we need to have a brief history lesson and explore two different theories on what causes illness.

For centuries, humans believed that disease and illness were caused by effectively bad vibes. Hippocrates, back in the 5th century, started the idea that the environment was affecting human disease.

He mentioned the seasons, the weather, hunger, thirst, etc. as possible root causes of illness, and to be fair, he wasn't far off. His hypothesis that humans are sick from malnutrition and inadequate shelter were pretty much close to being right.

He didn't quite understand why, but as any good scientist, he was noticing a trend and sought to write about it. Fast forward to the first century BC, and Vitruvius described the potential effects of miasma while visiting a city.

he noted that foul smells permeated the city whenever the wind blew in from nearby marshes, correlating the foul smell with unhealthiness. This is partly an evolutionary reaction, as humans have developed a keen sense of smell to detect rotten and decaying plants and animals.

Animals do this as well in the wild. It triggers our receptors in our brains responsible for nausea, so that if our body consumed something that smelled terrible, decaying, and something like death, we would vomit it up in an effort to protect us from accidentally poisoning ourselves, should the foul-smelling thing be nearby and have potentially contaminated whatever it is we were eating or drinking.

Miasma theory was also used during the 80s when cholera was spreading across Europe. Dr. William Farr, the assistant commissioner of the London Census, was a strong believer in the miasma theory, and he cited the foul-smelling taint as a source, which is actually not far off either, because water has been shown in past to actually hold the cholero bacteria that caused this illness to begin with.

Florence Nightingale herself was always a big supporter, but while she wasn't exactly correct, her work to make hospitals sanitary and fresh- smelling did a lot to combat disease in general.

And we know that from our sanitization practices just by washing hands, by antiseptic rinses, things like that. Sanitization does help stave off illness.

One of the more striking examples of miasma was the Black Plague of Middle Ages. Again, thought to be brought on by bad air, cities and villages would keep fires going in the streets to help purify the air.

Barrels, campfires, whatever the case it was. The idea was so mainstream that Pope Clement VI sat between two lit fires at the advice of doctors at that time.

Now, obviously, the Middle Ages, there was no air conditioning. It was muggy, it was hot in the middle of the summertime. And, of course, papal garments aren't exactly lightweight.

So, for Plum Clement to actually do this, It took a lot of effort and willpower, and, you know, God bless him, because it actually worked. Turns out that it prevented plague-carrying fleas from reaching and biting him.

Even though a third of his cartos actually died during the plague, he himself was kept alive just because of fires themselves, which prevented the flea from getting to him So while the miasma theory was at least partly responsible for the ideas of sanitation, germ theory quickly took over in the later 19th century, thanks in no smart park to the works of Semmelweis, John Snow, the other John snow, Joseph Lister, and Louis Pasteur.

Even before them, Anton van Leeuwenhoek, early pioneer of the microscope, was able to actually see bacteria and yeast. Louis pasteur was my personal favorite, as he was also able disprove the idea of spontaneous generation, or basically microbes in life just randomly generating out of thin air.

by showing bacteria did not grow by itself in nutrient broth until it was exposed to air, which could also be explained by the miasma theory, but in this situation, we are actually able to see the growth of bacteria under a microscope by this point in time.

It wasn't until Robert Koch in the late 1800s came along when he published his Koch's postulates that establish the causality between microbes and diseases.

Anyone that has studied college biology, high school biology even, understands Koch's postulates where he correlated the idea of bacteria being present in dead tissue and likely as a source of disease.

In my opinion, he is the true father of germ theory and is a theory that he has yet to be disproven because time and time again, it has just proven to true.

So where does that leave us with RFK Jr.? Well, RFK has endorsed miasma theory as a major way in which disease occurs. In his book, The Real Anthony Fauci, Bill Gates, Big Pharma and the Global War on Democracy and Public Health, it's a pretty long title, he states, miasma theory emphasizes preventing disease by fortifying the immune system through nutrition and reducing exposures to environmental toxins and stresses.

Again, mostly true, right? But that's not what miasmus theory is. And it is not a bad idea. We already talked about how Hippocrates and Florence Nightingale were on to something with their take on miasma theory.

He fails to acknowledge the idea that germ theory is the underlying cause of contagious disease.

RFK Jr.'s disease beliefs and HIV vaccine concerns

And this impacts a number of his beliefs, especially the ideas of healthy individuals do not get sick. In his mind, someone who is healthy has the right tools to fend off any environmental hazards and miasma that can cause disease.

It's one of the biggest reasons why we are seeing a push against vaccination of not just COVID-19, but measles, rubella, chickenpox, and now even HIV.

During a health freedom conference in 2021 in Ohio, RFK was seeing stated AIDS is caused by a passenger virus from poppers. not from a retrovirus for which we all know to be the actual cause.

You can say that at least he acknowledges AIDS is caused by a virus, but to ignore all the scientific understanding of what the actually virus is in order to scare people away from something that is completely unrelated is mind-boggling.

Until you realize he actually accused scientists and the NIH of misidentifying the cause of AIDS to being a Retrovirus, So they could collude with the pharmaceutical industry to sell AZT, which is the first drug ever to actually combat HIV.

This is according to a July 2023 article written in New York Magazine. In that same book where he endorses the enhancement theory of disease, he also praises a renowned AIDS denialist by the name of Peter Duesberg, whose work to persuade the South African government to not give AZ-T cost an estimated 330,000 deaths, according a 2009 article from the Harvard School of Public Health.

This is important because just announced on June 20th, the FDA approved a twice-yearly vaccine for HIV called Yes2Go. It's a milestone that under normal circumstances would make front-page news, given the long, drawn-out and expensive battle to find a cure for hiv.

However, this comes soon after the Washington Post reported that just two days later, The Trump administration is going to phase out the NIH support of HIV clinical guidelines as of next year.

and does nothing to alleviate the concerns that R. F. K. Jr. is going to possibly gut the Office of Infectious Diseases and HIV AIDS Policy. Though not especially pertinent in emergency medicine, primary care and infectious disease clinicians look towards these guidelines and this office to help support their efforts in treating individuals both at-risk and infected with HIV.

Phasing out guidelines makes no sense, especially given that we have a breakthrough of an actual vaccine just out on the horizon. And speaking of vaccines, a big reason why RFK Jr.

and his theories need to be called out is because this week, the ACIP committee is scheduled to vote on vaccinations. The firings and the subsequent rehirings warrant its own critique.

So let's take a look. So what's the big deal about the ACIP? Well, as I said earlier, today, June 25th, the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices is scheduled to meet for a three-day session where members will be voting on vaccination recommendations and schedules.

The committee meets regularly and chances are good you have never heard of them. That is until June 9th when R. F. K. Jr. made headlines after he fired all 17 members of the C. D. C.' 's Vaccine Advisory Board.

It's alarming for a number of reasons, but before we get into that, we need to figure out who these people are and why they're important. From the CDC's own website, ASIP comprises of medical and public health experts who develop recommendations on the use of vaccines in the civilian population of the United States.

ASP consists of 15 experts, who are voting members and are responsible for making vaccine recommendations. 14

of these members have expertise in vaccinology, immunology pediatrics, internal medicine, nursing, family medicine virology, public, health infectious disease, or preventative medicine.

ACIP firings and controversial new appointees

One member is a consumer representative who provides perspective on the social and community aspects of vaccination, and certain people, for obvious reasons, are not considered for ACIP membership.

For example, people who are directly employed or have an immediate family member directly deployed by a vaccine manufacturer, hold a patent on a vaccines or related product, or serve on board of directors of a vaccination manufacturer are excluded from ACEP membership, at least that was the case until Monday, June 9th.

Today, we are prioritizing the restoration of public trust above any specific pro or anti-vaccine agenda. The public must know that unbiased science, evaluated through a transparent process and insulated from a conflicts of interest, guides the recommendations of our health agencies.

That's a statement he released through the NIH website declaring the firing of all 17 members. The news came as a shock in no small part because these members had terms that didn't expire until at least 2028. In the op-ed Kennedy published in the Wall Street Journal, RFK says the committee has been plagued with persistent conflicts of interest.

It sounds reasonable then why they should be fired, except the evidence he cites is 25 years old and the Committee has strengthened its vetting process since then.

Noel Brewer, a professor at the University of North Carolina Gillings School of Public Health, had been on ASAP since July 2024, before the firings of course blindsided him.

He said in response, All ASAP members go through a vetting for conflicts of interest. We're not allowed to accept money from drug companies for consulting or grants, and we're allowed not to sue them.

In addition, members are required to disclose any conflicts or interests which are published on the CDC website. Meetings are open to the public, typically live streams on CDC websites as well, And of course are opened for public comment.

Process from nomination to membership typically takes a year just due to overall vetning process and how extensive it is. However, just three days after the fires were announced, RFK unveiled eight people he had chosen to serve on the advisory committee.

This occurred without any oversight or vetting, and as you may have guessed by now, he chose individuals who are more likely than not to have set up an anti-vaccine agenda.

The new members include Dr. Joseph R. Hibbeln, Martin Kulldorf, Rhetsef Levy, Dr Robert Malone, Kody Meissner, Michael A. Ross, James Pagano, Vicky Pepsworth.

Many of these names rose to promise during the COVID-19 pandemic, From there, they criticize everything from school closures to the vaccines themselves.

The misinformation that they spread is still being felt in medical communities, with a reduced rate in vaccine uptake on not just the COVID-19 boosters, but also vaccines in general.

So why the concern? Well, let's take a look at the more concerning names and see for ourselves. First off, Robert Malone. He infamously proclaims himself the inventor of mRNA vaccines, when in reality, he only did some early work on them in the 80s and holds one patent, compared to the 60 patents that are out there for the technology itself.

He has also falsely claimed that getting vaccinated from COVID-19 puts people at higher risk of death from Covid-19, which is demonstrably untrue. In fact, the majority of deaths from covid-nineteen occurred in the year 2020 before the vaccine was even available.

Martin Kulldorf, who advocated for mass exposure to covid 19 in beginning to allow for rapid herd immunity, wrote and co-signed the Great Barrington Declaration.

Jay Bhattacharyan, through something enough, also co-wrote the declaration, but he was unavailable for the position because he is now the director of the NIH.

Cody Meissner was previously on ASIP until he made 12 conflict of interest disclosures from 2008 to 2012, and his tenure was subsequently not renewed.

It's an interesting choice, given Kennedy's intent on purging people with conflicts of interests. Vicky Pepsworth is an RN who holds a PhD in health science research and is a board member of the National Vaccine Information Center.

It's an organization that sounds pretty benign and pretty important. However, it's actually an anti-vax group that spreads misinformation regarding vaccine safety and risk, namely that vaccines cause chronic illnesses and disabilities in children, not just autism, but from anything to paralysis to death to you name it, if vaccines probably caused it.

Again, it goes back to R. F. K. Jr.'s idea that healthy children do not die and do get sick unless, of course, exposed to a vaccine. Recep Levy is another individual who, while he was working at MIT, helped stoke fears about the COVID-19 shots.

In 2023, he went on social media falsely claiming the vaccines were not effective and instead caused unprecedented levels of harm, including the death of young people and children.

Again, demonstrably false, as the idea of young people dying from the COVID-19 vaccine was greatly misconstrued. So while these people are obviously the most concerning members of this board, they are at least still a very small part.

Who were the others that RFK named? Joseph Hibbeln is a nutritional scientist who, while doing excellent work in the 2000s showing the benefits outweighing the risk of fish consumption in pregnancy, has no professional background in vaccines.

His nutritional stance on omega-3 fatty acids and the idea that pregnant women can still eat fish and should eat is important for overall public health, but again doesn't really meet the ACIP criteria of actually having worked or done research on vaccination to begin with.

Michael A. Ross is an OB-GYN who is on the board for Lorea RX. Turns out Loreia RX, you can kind of guess from the name by itself, is a pharmaceutical company or more specifically a supplement company and works as a startup trying to use AI to deliver medicine.

Again, also with no research or work experience with vaccines. And finally, James Pagano. He's an ER physician who has no research or work experience related to vaccine at all.

And to the last point, while it is cool to see an physician in an area of prominence, it would be the equivalent of me being on the ACIP. I am smart enough to know that I'm not well versed in the nuance of vaccine research to make effective policy decisions.

Obviously, we can have productive conversations about it and evidence-based opinions, but to actually have work experience and research experience on vaccines that really should go to somebody who actually has those credentials rather than just, well, another fucking ER doctor.

While these are only 8 members and not enough to fill a quorum regarding policy, one thing is quite clear. These members either align with RFKs anti-vaccines or have no experience working with or doing research on vaccines in general.

This list is so egregious that medical groups from across the country have rose up and embedded an investigation into these picks. Namely, the American Medical Association, The American Academy of Pediatrics, and even the previous 17 fired members of the ASAP panel all of whom signed on to an article condemning their firings and stating RFK has, quote, critically weakened the U. S.

Flu vaccine debate and closing warnings

vaccine program. So with all this, what's on the agenda for ACIP when they meet today? Well, the old draft of the Agenda is scrapped and the new agenda is going to instead have voting decisions on infant and maternal respiratory syncytial virus, RSV, prophylactics, plus influenza vaccines.

as well as non-voting discussions on COVID, chikungunya, anthrax and measles, mumps, varicola and rubella vaccines. The panel's vote on flu vaccines will also zero in on shots containing thimerosal, despite the data showing it is harmless.

For those who don't know what thimerasal is, and if you've been living under a rock, I can understand that, it's a mercury-containing preservative used in certain adult flu-vaccines, but has been incorrectly linked to the development of autism in the past.

This ingredient was actually removed from most childhood vaccines in the early 2000s, and now is only present in a certain type of flu vaccine where it's used as multi-dose vials.

And again, it is a preservative, actually used for storage, which the multi dose vial is required in order to actually be multi dos. It has never actually been found to be unsafe, despite RFK's rants otherwise.

This discussion is what we as experts feared would happen, rehashing previously settled science regarding vaccine ingredients to provide just more fear-mongering.

Now thankfully, on June 23, Republican Senator Bill Cassidy, the tie-breaking vote for RFK Jr.'s nomination to head the HHS, and who was the chairman of the Health, Education, Labor, & Pensions Committee, or the HELP Committee criticized RFP for the appointments and called for a delay in the next meeting day, stating, Although the appointments to ASIP have scientific credentials, many do not have the scientific expertise studying microbiology, epidemiology or immunology.

In particular, some lack experience studying new technology such as mRNA vaccines and may even have a preconceived bias against him. or shit. Wednesday's meeting should not proceed with a relatively small panel, and no CDC director in place to approve the panel's recommendations.

The meeting will be delayed until the meeting is fully staffed with more robust and balanced representation, as required by law, including those with direct relevant expertise.

Now, a noble statement to be sure. However, RFK and the CDC is not beholden to Congress in terms of their meeting schedule. Cassidy was reportedly promised by RF K that no changes to ACIP were going to made, yet here we are.

As of this posting, it's unclear what the committee decides to do regarding vaccines, or if they will even meet in general. However, one thing is clear, R. F. K.

Jr. in presenting a facade of rational thinking regarding life-saving vaccines outsmarted Congress long enough to become the center of a rapidly growing movement that seeks to pivot away from proven, life saving therapies into fraud, rampant conflicts of interest, and poor science.

This is just the latest example and one that can have lasting consequences for decades. And this is to say nothing of other conspiracies he has peddled, from antidepressants being the root cause of school shootings, to fluoride and tap water leading to developmental delay in human toxicity, it's past time scientists and physicians alike raise their voices in opposition to the danger RFK presents.

No longer theoretical, his actions are eroding public trust in already proven medicine and science, which makes sense if you take everything into context of his disbelief that germs are real.

And that does it for our show for this week. Thanks again to everybody who has helped support this show and this channel. And again, if you have any show ideas or if your in the medical field and want to discuss medical topics with me, you can email me at jeffordcast at gmail dot com.

I'll be watching the ACIP proceedings very closely today and hopefully in future I can make an episode showing how this episode really was all for nothing.

But like I always say, what the hell do I know? I'm not some other freaking ER doctor, so don't take my advice for it. Do your own research and stay healthy out there.

Be careful with the bad vibes. We'll see you next time.