



**Science Media Centre**  
*where science meets the headlines*

**Fiona Fox**  
 Director



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**SMC Philosophy**

*" We'll get the media to 'DO' science better  
 when scientists 'DO' media better "*



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**17 January 2004**  
**Zavos comes to town**  
*Rapid Reaction*



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17 January 2004

The screenshot shows the BBC News website interface. The main headline reads: "Doctor set to make clone claim". Below it, a sub-headline states: "The controversial fertility expert, Professor Panos Zavos, is expected to make an announcement about his work on human cloning on Saturday." A small image of a human embryo is visible. The page includes navigation links for various news categories and a search bar.



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**Science Media Centre Press Release**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 17 JANUARY 2004**

**Scientists react to Zavos cloning announcement**

- Prof Peter Braude - Professor of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Kings College London
- Prof Robin Lovell-Badge - Professor of Genetics at the MRC's National Institute for Medical Research
- Dr Wolf Reik - Head of Developmental Genetics Programme, Babraham Institute, Cambridge
- Dr Simon Best - Chair of the Bioindustry Association
- Dr Sue Avery - Chair of the Association of Clinical Embryologists
- Dr Simon Fishel - Managing Director, CARE Fertility Group, Nottingham

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13 August 2008

Outcry at doctor's cloned baby claim

Scientist attacks hype over clone research

Clone doc baby bid attacked

By STEPHEN WORTH

Dr Zou's claim that he had cloned a human embryo for research into infertility has caused an outcry among scientists and ethicists.

The doctor, who is based in the UK, announced his claim on the website of the Chinese government's Science and Technology Commission.

He said he had cloned a human embryo for research into infertility, but his claim has been widely criticised.

Scientists have expressed concern that the doctor's work could lead to the creation of a child, which is prohibited by law in many countries.

The doctor's work has also raised ethical concerns about the use of human embryos for research.

Dr Zou's claim has also been criticised for its lack of scientific detail and for its failure to provide any evidence to support his claims.

The doctor's work has also been criticised for its potential to lead to the creation of a child, which is prohibited by law in many countries.

The doctor's work has also raised ethical concerns about the use of human embryos for research.

Dr Zou's claim has also been criticised for its lack of scientific detail and for its failure to provide any evidence to support his claims.

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13 August 2008

Prince Charles warns of 'GM crops catastrophe'

Rapid Reaction

Science Media Centre Press Release  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 13 August 2008

Experts react to Prince Charles' statements about GM

Ian Denholm - Head of Plant and Invertebrate Ecology at Rothamsted Research Institute

Dr Alan M. Dewar - independent entomologist

Dr Giles Oldroyd - Research Group Leader at the John Innes Centre

Professor Alison M. Smith OBE - Research Group Leader at the John Innes Centre

Prof Rosie Hails - ecologist at the NERC Centre For Ecology and Hydrology

Prof Johnjoe McFadden - molecular geneticist at the University of Surrey

Prof Ottoline Leyser FRS - plant geneticist at the University of York

Prof Jim Dunwell - biological scientist at the University of Reading

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The Daily Telegraph

MOURINHO MY FANTASY FOOTBALL TEAM WILL BEAT HANSEN'S CAN YOU BEAT HENRY'S THREE DAYS LEFT TO ENTER

Earth faces GM crops catastrophe, warns Prince

Savers to suffer as inflation hits 4.4pc

Multi-national firms conducting a gigantic experiment that has gone seriously wrong

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Science Media Centre Press Release  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 13 August 2008

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Telegraph.co.uk

Prince Charles accused by scientists of abusing his position over GM food comments

By Andrew Walker and Caroline Gammell  
LAST UPDATED: 8:02pm BST 13/08/2008

The Prince of Wales has been plunged into an extraordinary row with scientists after they accused him of seriously abusing his position over his comments on GM food.

• Prince Charles sparks debate over GM crops claims  
• Prince Charles warns GM crops risk causing biggest-ever environmental disaster  
• The Prince of Wales: 'If that is the future, could we out'

Scientists reacted angrily to the warning from the Prince in his interview in the Daily Telegraph that GM crops risked causing the world's worst environmental disaster.

MPs accused him of being a "buffoon" who risked inflicting starvation on millions of people in Africa.

But the Prince will be heartened by the revelation that there is now only one GM trial ongoing in Britain - in Cambridgeshire - and there are no plans to licence any more.

Some 54 have been conducted since they were approved by the government in 2000.

Prof Ottoline Leyser, a plant geneticist at the University of York who is a Fellow of the Royal Society, said: "I am disappointed with the whole environmental movement."

"This is a rabid anti-GM, Misguidedly demonising GM results in the real issues being sidelined, creating the very problems that Prince Charles is trying to address."

"There are several issues that have been muddled together, resulting in serious dangers to the future direction of agriculture."

guardian.co.uk

Scientists condemn Prince Charles's attack on GM crops

Experts argue that Prince Charles's response to GM technology is "showy", "misses the point" and is "morally indefensible"

Start writing  
guardian.co.uk, Wednesday August 13 2008 17:33 BST  
Article history

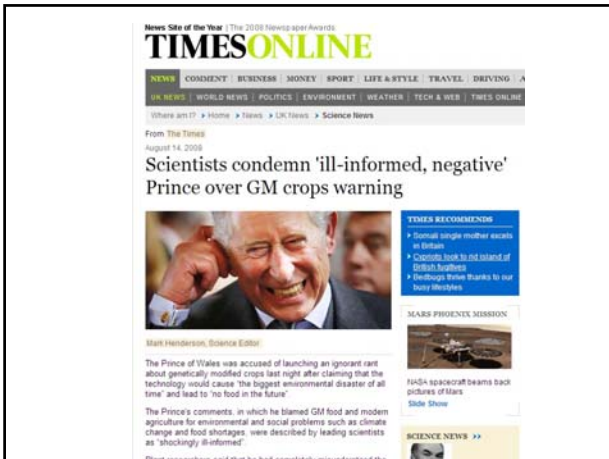
Scientists have lined up to condemn Prince Charles's passionate attack on genetically modified crops and industrial farming.

While his vivid vision of "conducting a gigantic experiment with nature... which has gone seriously wrong" has garnered support from some, including Friends of the Earth and the Soil Association, researchers have attacked his criticisms as "scientifically and morally indefensible" and accused the Prince of "showy environmentalism".

The following reactions were gathered by the Science Media Centre.

**Scientifically and morally indefensible**  
Ian Denholm, head of plant and invertebrate ecology at Rothamsted Research Institute: "No scientist working in the agricultural sector doubts that the intensification of cropping over the last 50 or so years, coupled with climate change in some places, has led to severe challenges including areas of land becoming unsuitable for the cultivation of conventional crop varieties. It is scientifically and morally indefensible not to explore, without prejudice, GM technology as one possible solution to these problems."

**Showy environmentalism**  
Johnjoe McFadden, molecular geneticist at the University of Surrey: "Prince Charles claims that GM crops will be an environmental disaster. But his vision for agriculture would be a much greater disaster for the world's poor whose primary concern is to find their next meal. Recent studies demonstrate that GM crops can generate crop yield increases, particularly in the developing world where so much food crop ends up in the bins of the rich and is destroyed by rodents. Misleadingly, while a small...



**Seize the agenda to turn the story round when the issue is covered badly**

**12 February 2007**  
**NHS computer system**  
*Background Briefing*

**Science Media Centre Background Briefing**  
**What? Connecting for Health: Will e-health make us healthier?**  
**When? 10.30am, Monday 12 February 2007**  
**Where? Science Media Centre, 19 Albemarle Street, W1S 4BS**

"Expensive", "mishandled" and "plagued by security concerns", the NHS may be wishing it had never heard of *Connecting for Health*. Over the next ten years, this integrated IT system will connect over 30,000 GPs in England to almost 300 hospitals and give patients access to their personal health and care information. The Department of Health describes the role of connecting to health as "to bring modern computer systems into the NHS which will improve patient care and services". But will information and communication technologies actually improve patient care? Will *'connecting for health'* ever overcome its failures to be the system the NHS hoped for? What role will technology play in turning medicine from treatment to prevention? How will a new IT system change medical research?

Speakers include:  
**Dr Mark Walport**, Director of the Wellcome Trust and previously Professor of Medicine and Head of the Division of Medicine at Imperial College London  
**Prof Alan Gillies**, Head of the Health Informatics Research Unit, Lancashire School of Health and Postgraduate Medicine.  
**Prof Carol Dezateux**, Director of the MRC Centre of Epidemiology for Child Health  
**Andrew Haw** represents the British Computer Society's Health Informatics Forum and is also Director of Information & Communications Technology & EPR, University Hospital Birmingham (UHB) NHS Foundation Trust.  
**Dr John Parkinson**, Head of the General Practice Research Database

**Journalists attending**

Nick Triggle	BBC
Ian Sample	Guardian
Jane Kirby	PA
Daniel Martin	Daily Mail
Ben Quinn	Daily Telegraph
David Rose	The Times

**BBC News 12 February 2007**

**Concerns over NHS IT criticisms**  
 The benefits of the £4.6bn upgrade of the NHS IT system are being questioned amid the criticisms, experts say.  
 The 10-year IT programme is aimed at linking more than 60,000 GPs in England to nearly 300 hospitals for 2014 and includes electronic medical records.  
 Critics have raised concerns over patient confidentiality and delays which could cause costs to spiral.  
 But drug regulators, NHS managers and academics said the project will improve patient safety and aid research.  
 The project, overseen by a government agency called Connecting for Health, is the biggest civil IT scheme in the world.  
 As well as setting up a centralised medical records system for 100 patients in England, it involves an online booking system, a new diagnostic and test computer network links hospital doctors, of the British Medical Association.  
 GPs have raised concerns about patient confidentiality - medical records will be able to be accessed across the country through software restricting access depending on a person's position are being built in.  
 Parts of the scheme are also running behind schedule, prompting fears the project could run over budget.

**Press Association Newfile**

February 12, 2007 Monday 2:32 PM BST  
SECTION: HOME NEWS  
LENGTH: 524 words  
HEADLINE: £12.4bn NHS IT PROGRAMME DEFENDED  
BYLINE: Jane Kirby, PA Health Correspondent

Experts launched a defence of the Government's controversial NHS IT programme today, saying it will benefit patient care. The National Programme for IT (NPIIT) will link more than 30,000 GPs in England to hundreds of hospitals by 2012. It involves an online booking system, a centralised medical records system for 50 million patients, e-prescriptions and fast computer network links between NHS organisations. But the programme has come in for heavy criticism over delays to implementing the service, a lack of support from staff, and question marks over patient confidentiality. Today, Dr Mark Walport, director of the Wellcome Trust, Andrew Haw, from Assist which represents ICT professionals in health and social care, Dr John Parkinson, head of the General Practice Research Database at the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), Alan Gillies, professor of information management at the Lancashire School of Health and Postgraduate Medicine, and Carol Dezateux, professor of paediatric epidemiology at University College London, defended the programme.

19 February 2007

**Science of Health Economics**  
*Background Briefing*

**Science Media Centre Background Briefing**

**What?** The science of health economics

**When?** 10.00am, Monday 19 February 2007

**Where?** Science Media Centre, 19 Albemarle Street, W1S 4BS

Underlying the huge public rows over access to existing drugs for Alzheimer's or new 'wonder drugs' like Avastin and Herceptin, lies the mysterious science of health economics with its 'QALYs' and 'ICERs'. With drugs companies announcing exciting new treatments on a regular basis, the Science Media Centre has invited four of the UK's leading experts to brief science and health reporters on the methods they use to work out cost effectiveness for the NHS. According to experts embroiled in this complex science, what many fail to understand is that there are very cheap drugs that are actually a bad buy, very expensive drugs that are a good buy and some drugs that may be good but would break the NHS budget!!!!!! To find out more about the science of health economics come and hear the following:

**Prof Michael Rawlins** - Professor of Clinical Pharmacology at the University of Newcastle and Chair of NICE  
**Prof David Webb** - Professor of Therapeutics and Clinical Pharmacology at University of Edinburgh and Chair of the Scottish Medicines Consortium  
**Prof David Barnett** - Professor of Clinical Pharmacology at the University of Leicester Medical School  
**Dr Andrew Walker** - Senior Lecturer in Health Economics, University of Glasgow

**Journalists attending**

Rebecca Smith	Evening Standard
Jane Dreaper	BBC Radio News
Fiona MacRae	Daily Mail
Victoria Fletcher	The Express
Jane Kirby	PA
Jeremy Lawrence	Independent
Ben Hirschler	Reuters
Emma Wilkinson	BBC News Online
Nick Timmins	FT
Andy Coughlan	New Scientist
David Rose	The Times
Sarah Boseley	The Guardian
Rachael Buchanan	BBC 10 o'clock News

20 March 2007

**Adolescent vaccination**  
*Background Briefing*

**Science Media Centre Background Briefing**

**What?** Adolescent vaccination – the big new challenge!

**When?** Tuesday 20 March, 10.30am

**Where?** Science Media Centre, 19 Albemarle Street, W1S 4BS

The arrival of the new vaccine for cervical cancer has prompted some media interest in the issues around teenage vaccination. But vaccine experts are now calling for an urgent national debate around the broader issues of vaccinating teenagers, pointing out that HPV is only one of a long list of possible new vaccines and booster vaccines that could be offered to teenagers in coming years. Professor Adam Finn, one of the UK's leading vaccine experts said "Up to now all our efforts at promoting the positive impact of vaccination have tended to focus on parents – now we have a completely different ball game with teenagers – notorious for being strong willed and not always deferring to their parents – having to make up their own minds about vaccination. To avoid the issue becoming a battle-ground – we need to urgently kick start a national debate involving schools, public health experts, parents and, most importantly, involving teenagers themselves." To help kick-start that debate the Science Media Centre has invited four leading experts into the Centre to brief the media.

**Speakers**

**Adam Finn**, Professor of paediatrics, University of Bristol  
**Andy Hall**, Professor of Epidemiology, London School of Tropical Medicine  
**Dr Claire Cameron**, epidemiologist at Health Protection Scotland

**Journalists  
attending**

Rebecca Smith	Evening Standard
Jeremy Lawrence	Independent
Rachael Buchanan	BBC
Sarah Hall	Guardian
Caroline Parkinson	BBC News Website
Emily Cook	Daily Mirror
David Rose	The Times
Victoria Fletcher	Express
Daniel Martin	Daily Mail

DAILY MAIL March 21, 2007  
**PUPILS 'SHOULD BE  
VACCINATED AGAINST SIX  
MORE DISEASES'**  
BY DANIEL MARTIN

**Coverage**  
Daily mail  
Independent  
BBC  
The Times

The Independent  
March 21, 2007 Wednesday  
**Vaccinate children against sexually  
transmitted diseases, say doctors**  
Jeremy Laurance Health Editor

The Times  
**New vaccines for teenagers to ward  
off sex infections and hepatitis**  
David Rose

**Complain cleverly...**

**Background**

- June 2006
- New flurry of stories on MMR & autism

**27 June 2006**

**Open letter from UK's leading  
experts**

**For immediate release Tuesday 27th June 2006**

**Scientists call for action to avert childhood deaths**

In an extraordinary and unprecedented move, 30 of the UK's leading paediatricians and childhood vaccination experts have issued an Open Letter warning that further lives will be lost unless we draw a line under the controversy over MMR and autism.

Prompted by a recent flurry of media reports reigniting concerns about the safety of MMR, the letter calls on the media, politicians and health professionals to 'draw a line under the question of any association between MMR and autism' in the light of overwhelming body of evidence that shows the vaccine is safe.

The letter says:

"We are now faced with a potentially serious situation. Years of low uptake mean large numbers of unprotected children are now entering school. Unless this is rectified urgently, and children are immunised, there will be further outbreaks and we will see more unnecessary deaths

"It is not too late to avert this predictable tragedy. It is time that due weight is given to the overwhelming body of scientific evidence in favour of the vaccine. Misguided concepts of 'balance' have confused and dangerously misled parents. We all, media, politicians and health professionals, have a responsibility to protect the health of our children."

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The letter is signed by the following:

Dr David Elliman  
Consultant in Community Child Health, Great Ormond Street Hospital, London

Dr Helen Bedford  
Senior Lecturer in Children's Health, Institute of Child Health, London

Dr Patricia Hamilton  
President of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, London

Professor Sir David Hall  
Emeritus Professor of Community Paediatrics, University of Sheffield

Prof Angus Nicoll CBE  
Health Protection Agency, London

Dr Natasha Crowcroft  
Health Protection Agency, London

Dr Mary Ramsay  
Health Protection Agency, London

Professor Neil McIntosh  
Professor of Child Life and Health, Edinburgh

Dr Mario Abinun  
Consultant Paediatric Immunologist, Newcastle Upon Tyne

Dr Roderick Skinner  
Consultant in Paediatric Oncology and BMT, Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

Professor Adam Finn  
Professor of Paediatrics, University of Bristol

Dr Paul Heath  
Senior Lecturer and Honorary Consultant, Paediatric Infectious Diseases, St Georges Hospital University of London

Dr Martin Richardson  
Consultant Paediatrician, Peterborough District Hospital

Professor Simon Kroll  
Professor of Paediatrics, Imperial College, London

Professor Brent Taylor  
Professor of Community Child Health, University College London

Professor Richard Moxon  
Action Research Professor, Oxford

Dr E Graham Davies  
Consultant Paediatric Immunologist, Great Ormond Street Hospital

Dr Anthony Hamden  
University Lecturer and Principal in General Practice, University of Oxford

Dr Nik Johnson  
Consultant Paediatrician, Hinchingsbrooke Hospital

Professor David Goldblatt  
Professor of Vaccinology and Immunology, Institute of Child Health, London

Professor Andrew J Cant  
Consultant in Paediatric Immunology & Infectious Diseases, Newcastle General Hospital

Dr Annabel Foot  
Consultant Paediatric Oncologist, Bristol Children's Hospital

Dr Julia Chisholm  
Consultant Paediatric Oncologist, Great Ormond Street Hospital, London

Dr Sally E Kinsey  
Consultant Paediatric Haematologist and Lead Clinician for Paediatric Haematology and Oncology, St James's University Hospital, Leeds

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**BBC News, 26 June 2006**

**Coverage**  
Reuters  
ITN/TV/Ch4 websites  
BBC Online  
Mirror Online  
The Sun  
Press Association  
Guardian  
Daily Mail  
The Scotsman  
Telegraph  
Times

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**The Sun – 27-06-06**  
**Measles alert by jab docs**  
By EMMA MORTON

**Daily Mail – 27-06-06**  
**Give your children MMR, top doctors appeal**

**The Daily Telegraph – June 27, 2006**  
**MMR confusion 'could lead to deaths'**  
Nic Fleming Medical Correspondent

**Draw line under MMR scare, plead top doctors**  
Ian Sample, science correspondent  
Tuesday June 27, 2006  
Guardian

**The Scotsman – Tue 27 Jun 2006**  
**Child deaths warning over 'groundless' MMR fears**

**The Times – June 27, 2006,**  
**MMR vaccine scare 'must be dismissed'**  
Mark Henderson Science Editor

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**Get more media-savvy...**

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**16 July 2007**

**Andrew Wakefield tribunal**

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**Background**

- Held brainstorm
- DH & leading vaccine experts said: 'It's not about MMR'
- We said: 'RUBBISH! Of course it is!'

**Under Strict Embargo: 00.01hrs Monday 16th July, 2007**  
**Major Scientific and Medical Institutions Back MMR Jab Ahead of Wakefield GMC Hearing**

The UK's major medical and scientific institutions have come together today to state their support for the MMR triple vaccine. Prompted by concerns that the MMR and autism row will surface again during the GMC hearing of the case against Andrew Wakefield, they would like to restate that a large body of scientific evidence shows no link between the vaccine and autism.

The statement reads:

**"The undersigned believe that the MMR triple vaccine protects the health of children. A large body of scientific evidence shows no link between the vaccine and autism."**

Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health  
Royal College of General Practitioners  
The Royal College of Pathologists  
Royal College of Physicians of London  
Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh  
Royal Society of Medicine - Section of Paediatrics and Child Health  
Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Trust  
UCL Institute of Child Health  
British Medical Association  
Faculty of Public Health  
The Wellcome Trust  
Medical Research Council  
Royal College of Nursing  
Unite/Community Practitioners' and Health Visitors' Association

For information or people to interview please call the Science Media Centre on 02076702980



**SCOTSMAN**  
**Doctors' leaders unite to rebut MMR fears**  
LYNDSEY MOSS HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

**DAILY MAIL (London) July 16, 2007 Monday**  
**DOCTORS BACK MMR AS THE JAB'S BIGGEST CRITIC FACES A FIGHT TO SAVE HIS CAREER**  
BY FIONA MACRAE SCIENCE REPORTER

**Press Association Newsfile**  
July 16, 2007 Monday 2:50 AM BST  
**FACTS BEHIND CONTROVERSIAL VACCINE**  
Jane Kirby, PA Health Correspondent



'Crap-busting'...



16 February 2007

**Eating watercress prevents cancer**  
*Rapid Reaction*



**Science Media Centre Press Release**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Expert responds to claims that watercress reduces the risk of cancer**

**Professor Karol Sikora, Medical Director, CancerPartnersUK Professor of Cancer Medicine, Imperial College, said:**

"The real problem is that its not watercress specific - there's nothing magic there. The press release from what is essentially a marketing association is grossly overstated. We know that fruits and vegetables all do affect DNA damage hence the five a day strategy to prevent cancer. There is absolutely nothing special about watercress. I don't think people will seriously convert to eating 85gm of the stuff each day. That's an awful lot of cress! You might even turn green. Much better to look holistically at your diet and ensure that there's plenty of fruit and vegetables, fibre and as little fat as possible. The other weakness in the study is that it obviously doesn't actually show a reduction in cancer incidence - its only a long term surrogate that's changed. Its a problem that always bedevils the science of interventional epidemiology. Such a study would take 20 years - by which time the investigators and their subjects would be rather bored!"



**Coverage**

Telegraph  
Daily Mail  
Daily Express  
The Guardian  
Independent  
BBC News website



**The Guardian**

**A bagful of cress a day may keep cancer cells at bay, study suggests**







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**23 April 2007**

**Baby milk formula for treating obesity**

*Rapid Reaction*


**Science Media Centre**  
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**Science Media Centre Press Release**  
UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 0001 HRS BST MONDAY 23 APRIL 2007

**Scientists respond to news of "Baby Formula that Fights Fat"**

Claire Williamson, Nutrition Scientist, British Nutrition Foundation

Christine Hancock, European Director of the Oxford Health Alliance\*

Steve O'Rahilly, Professor of Clinical Biochemistry and Medicine, University of Cambridge

Keith Frayn, Professor of Human Metabolism, University of Oxford

Dr Nick Finer, Clinical Director, Wellcome Clinical Research Facility, Addenbrookes Hospital, Cambridge

Amelia Lake, Post doc research fellow in obesogenic environments, Newcastle University, dietician, and registered public health nutritionist

Dr Ian Campbell, Hon. Medical Director of Weight Concern



**Science Media Centre**  
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DAILY MIRROR, Monday, April 23, 2007 Page 11

# BABY MILK FORMULA 'COULD END OBESITY'

**Dr Ian Campbell** medical director of Weight Concern, said: "It is pure flight of fancy that those consuming leptin from infancy will never get fat. To date, leptin has proved to be a great disappointment. Most of us have plenty and true deficiencies are rare. In fact, obese people tend to have it in higher-than-normal levels."





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**Scientists respond to news of "Baby Formula that Fights Fat"**






Nick Finer, clinical director at the Wellcome Clinical Research Facility at Addenbrookes Hospital, Cambridge, said: "The concept that adding something to a food that could permanently alter brain development is exciting but at the same time so scary that it would mean a wholly new approach about how such treatments can be tested and approved for use. Would the first trials be in newly born children? The importance of leptin (and other hormones) at determining the development of brain circuits that control energy balance is an area of current research interest. The leap to a functional food being effective or safe is enormous."

Other specialists in the field condemned the search for a medical answer to obesity, saying it is a modern social ill and that people need to address their lifestyles, not look for an artificial quick fix. More suggested the translation to baby food would be impossible as people would not put their children forward for trials of the formula when they did not know the risks involved.

Stephen O'Rahilly, head of the Diabetes, Obesity & Insulin Action department at Cambridge University, described it as "science fiction".


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## Leaflets for scientists

 <p><b>Peer Review</b></p>	 <p><b>Animal Research</b></p>	 <p><b>Risk</b></p>	 <p><b>Uncertainty</b></p>
 <p><b>Top Tips</b></p>			