

# Delightfully Absurd Santa Criticism

*By ACSH Staff — December 17, 2009*

The French news agency AFP brings us a story that seems at first like a parody in the style of *The Onion* but apparently is quite serious: "The current image of Santa Claus promotes obesity, drink-driving, speeding, and an unhealthy lifestyle, says a study from Australia's Monash University published in the *British Medical Journal*."

Not only is Santa Claus fat, they argue, but he consumes alcohol and drives, and without even wearing a seatbelt or a helmet. The article -- which really is a joy to read relates how the study goes on to condemn Santa's various excesses and suggests ways he might improve himself as a role model, including "swapping his reindeer for a bike or simply walking or jogging" advice we could all benefit from, presumably.

On a less ridiculous note, the study warns that Santa may spread diseases such as influenza when kids sit on his lap and whisper gift ideas in his ear.

"We've already covered the story of storefront Santas communicating disease to children, which is something parents should consider," says ACSH's Dr. Gilbert Ross, "but the rest of this reads like a parody or a comedy sketch. It's absolutely ridiculous."

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