

Pinterest: A Sewer Pipe of Anti-Science Propaganda



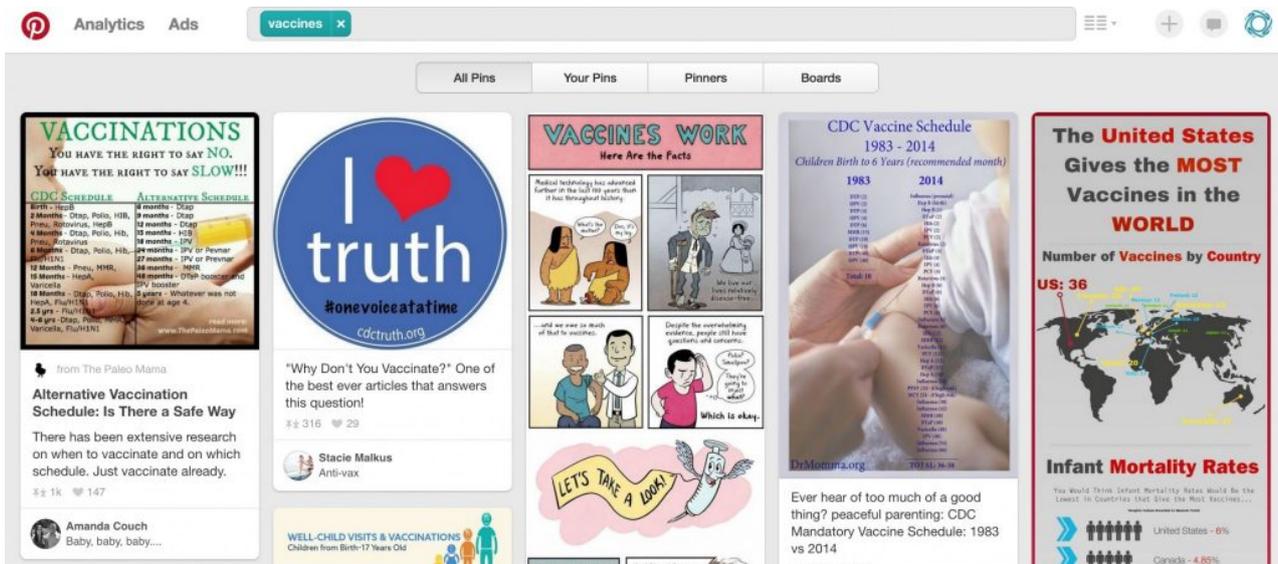
By Alex Berezow, PhD — May 17, 2016

The American Council on Science and Health has just launched a [new page](#) [1] on Pinterest. (Please [follow us](#) [1]!) As part of our mission to serve as trusted guides on complex science and health issues, we felt that it was imperative for us to have a visible and active presence on one of the world's most popular social media sites.

And wow, do we have our work cut out for us.

After just a few minutes on Pinterest, it was crystal clear that the site served as a gigantic sewer pipe for the worst sort of anti-science propaganda and paranoia that the Internet can vomit up.

Take vaccines, for instance. When I searched for "vaccines," these were the top five posts:



Anti-vaccine propaganda dominates Pinterest.

Two of the posts promoted an alternative vaccine schedule (because of the immunologically nonsensical belief that children receive too many vaccines in too short of a time period). A third post promotes the conspiracy website CDCTruth.org, while a fourth post blames infant mortality on vaccines. Only one of the five top posts endorsed vaccines.

Then, I tried "GMO." Here's what came up:

Pseudoscience and quack medicine aren't the only things polluting Pinterest. All sorts of terrible exercise and health advice are also waiting for people to discover.

This is horrible news. Alexa [ranks](#) [2] Pinterest as the 13th most popular website in America and the 32nd most popular in the world. It's [more popular than CNN](#) [3].

Pinterest is particularly popular with women. Exact numbers are hard to come by, but [women are estimated to outnumber men by 2-to-1](#) [4] on the social platform. And since food, nutrition, and children are popular topics on Pinterest, this means that women are being fed a load of dangerous nonsense on some of the most important science- and health-related issues of the day.

This represents an abject failure by science journalists. Both science and science journalism continue to be perceived as male-dominated and [gender-biased](#) [5]. Perhaps one reason is because science journalists are failing to reach out to women where they are (on Pinterest, apparently) and on topics that they care about.

We here at ACSH fully intend to rectify this situation. We hope others join us.

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Links

[1] <https://www.pinterest.com/ACSHorg/>

[2] <http://www.alexa.com/siteinfo/pinterest.com>

[3] <http://www.alexa.com/siteinfo/cnn.com>

[4] <http://sproutsocial.com/insights/pinterest-statistics/>

[5] http://www.cjr.org/the_observatory/science_writing_rebranding_fem.php