

**A REPLY TO ROB BREAKENRIDGE ON RECENT CALGARY HERALD ARTICLES AND AM 770 CHQR BROADCASTS**

Jerry Vandenberg, [Direct-MS](http://www.direct-ms.org)

As a frequent listener of your programs and occasional reader of your articles, I respect the skeptical philosophy that generally guides your interviews and editorials. However, on the CCSVI issue, your reporting is either badly uninformed or highly biased, or both. Given that these are serious charges to level against a journalist, examples are provided below to support this accusation.

In both your December 16 podcast and your December 21 article, you mentioned the studies from Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands that found no association between MS and CCSVI. A general listener or reader who does not follow medical journals or conference proceedings may conclude from your article that the science is more or less unanimously against such an association. What you failed to mention are the numerous studies that have shown associations, such as the studies from Poland, Lebanon and Buffalo. What you have done is cherry picked results to support your case – an example of bias.

In fact, by far the largest and most comprehensive trials being conducted are those at the University of Buffalo. So far, these studies have indicated statistically significant higher rates of CCSVI in MS subjects versus non-MS controls. Furthermore, the authors stated that “Presence of CCSVI is significantly related to more severe lesion and brain atrophy MRI measures”. Yet for some reason, in your August 4 column, you lumped this study in with those that found no association, and on your recent broadcast, you stated that “other studies have found that there is not a trend”.

Also in your August 4 article, you compared Paulo Zamboni to Andrew Wakefield. A superficial examination of their situations (such as the one you provided) does suggest some similarities. But this comparison only holds if you selectively ignore the studies that support Zamboni’s hypothesis.

It is reasonable to conclude that you are misinformed because you derive all of your information on this subject from your radio guests, all of whom are against the CCSVI hypothesis. Perhaps you should try speaking with one of the many scientists and doctors from Canada and elsewhere who have been advocating for this procedure. Alternatively, you can browse our website, [www.direct-ms.org](http://www.direct-ms.org), which has full rebuttals of some of the reports you are fond of quoting, such as the ethically-questionable and factually-deficient CIHR/MSSOC report. (Incidentally, this letter is posted on our [website](http://www.direct-ms.org) as well).

In the meantime, you are doing a serious injustice to those that rely on the Calgary Herald or AM 770 CHQR for informed and unbiased reporting on a serious public health issue. Furthermore, you are hurting the credibility of these news organizations. Until you acquaint yourself with all of the science, not just the part that supports your position, you should refrain from reporting on this issue.

Sincerely,  
Jerry Vandenberg  
Direct-MS.org

cc.  
[Laura Knop](mailto:Laura.Knop@am770.com), AM 770 CHQR News Director  
[Gord Smiley](mailto:Gord.Smiley@calgaryherald.com), Calgary Herald Editorial Page Editor  
[letters@calgaryherald.com](mailto:letters@calgaryherald.com)