



Hello and welcome to “Parents who Science!”

You’re probably wondering to yourself, “Where am I? What is this place?” Before I tell you all the things that “Parents who Science” (PWS) is, I’m going to start with what it is not. This forum is not:

- A place to show off how smart, knowledgeable, and educated you are.
- A place where it is acceptable to use laziness as an excuse to alienate another member due to their background, the quality of their source, or their stance on any topic. NEVER.
- A forum to seek medical advice of any kind. We provide research only.
- An echo-chamber.

PRETTY SHINY SCIENCE FORUMS RULES AND GUIDELINES	
RULE 1: NO PERSONAL ATTACK OF ANY TYPE. ◦ WE ARE FIRST AND FOREMOST A COMMUNITY BASED AROUND EDUCATION. MOCKING SOMEONE BASED ON BELIEFS, SOURCES, OR CLAIMS IS THE EASIEST WAY TO GET SOMEONE DEFENSIVE. ◦ BEING RIGHT IS NEVER AN EXCUSE TO BE UNCIVIL ◦ PERSONAL ATTACKS AND INSULTS HAVE NO PLACE IN THE FORUM. THIS INCLUDES ATTACKS DIRECTED AT GROUPS, EVEN IF THEY ARE NOT FORUM MEMBERS, EVEN IF THEY HAVE A WORLDVIEW THAT DIFFERS FROM OUR OWN. RULE 2: SUPPORT CLAIMS WITH EVIDENCE. ◦ IF YOU MAKE A CLAIM, STATEMENT OF FACT, OR ASSERTION IT MUST BE SUPPORTED WITH SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE WHEN ASKED. ◦ IF YOU PHRASE YOUR COMMENT AS AN ASSERTION, BE PREPARED TO HAVE YOUR EVIDENCE EXAMINED AND POSSIBLY CHALLENGED. ◦ WHEN CHALLENGING SOMEONE'S CLAIM, NEVER DISMISS BASED ON SOURCE ALONE ◦ PLEASE ADHERE TO THE HIERARCHY OF EVIDENCE ◦ PLEASE NOTE THAT ANECDOTES AND EXPERT OPINIONS ARE PERMITTED IN THE FORUM SO LONG AS THEY ARE NOT USED AS SUPPORT FOR A STATEMENT OR ASSERTION. RULE 3: NO DELETING THREADS/COMMENTS. ◦ IF YOU WANT TO DELETE A THREAD WHERE DISCUSSION HAS ALREADY BEGUN, YOU MUST OBTAIN MODERATOR PERMISSION. ◦ IF A POST IS MADE INADVERTENTLY OR IN ERROR, IT MAY BE IMMEDIATELY DELETED WITHOUT NOTIFYING A MODERATOR. RULE 4: NO SPAM/SOLICITING/FLOODING. ◦ NO ADVERTISING PRODUCTS, SERVICES, EVENTS, ORGANIZATIONS, COMMUNITIES, ETC. WITHOUT MODERATOR PERMISSION. WE ARE HAPPY TO ENDORSE APPROVED GROUPS, PAGES AND SITES THAT SUPPORT CRITICAL, EVIDENCE BASED THINKING. ◦ NO POSTING MORE THAN THREE COMMENTS IN A ROW. IF YOU HAVE POSTED THREE COMMENTS BACK TO BACK BUT STILL HAVE MORE TO ADD, TALK TO A MODERATOR VIA PM OR EDIT YOUR LAST COMMENT TO INCLUDE THE MISSING INFORMATION. RULE 5: NO DERAILING OR GISH GALLOP. ◦ TRY TO STAY ON THE TOPIC OF THE SPECIFIC THREAD.	◦ OFF TOPIC SNARK THAT CONTINUES AFTER IT IS MODERATED WILL BE GROUNDS FOR REMOVAL FROM FORUM. RULE 6: NO IMAGE MACROS OR "MEMES". ◦ IMAGES SHOULD ONLY BE POSTED IF THEY ARE NECESSARY FOR DISCUSSION OR IF THEY NEED TO BE DEBUNKED AND CRITICALLY EVALUATED. ◦ IMAGES MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY PROPER FRAMING AND DIRECTION FOR EVIDENCE BASED DISCUSSION. ◦ MODERATORS MAY DELETE IRRELEVANT OR UNNECESSARY IMAGES WITHOUT WARNING RULE 7: NO ABUSING WEBSITE FUNCTIONS. ◦ DO NOT USE BLOCK FUNCTION DURING ACTIVE THREADS TO SILENCE OTHER MEMBERS IN ORDER TO WIN YOUR DEBATE USE EVIDENCE, NOT ANTI PLAYBOOK. ◦ IF YOU FEEL THE NEED TO BLOCK DURING AN ACTIVE THREAD, PLEASE TALK TO A MODERATOR. ◦ IF YOU HAVE BLOCKED FOR AN OFF FORUM ISSUE, THAT IS NOT UNDER OUR PURVIEW. RULE 8: FOLLOW MODERATOR DIRECTION. ◦ OUR MODERATORS ARE VOLUNTEERS WHO HAVE THE BEST INTEREST OF THE FORUM IN MIND. ◦ FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH DIRECTIONS OR PUSH BACK MAY RESULT IN REMOVAL FROM THE FORUM WITHOUT WARNING. INSTABANS ◦ THREATS OF VIOLENCE ◦ DOXXING ◦ MOD BLOCKING ◦ SHARING UNREDACTED SCREENSHOTS FROM PWS GUIDELINES HERE ARE SOME HABITS THAT HELP THE FORUM RUN MORE EFFICIENTLY AND WITH LESS CONFLICT. WHILE PARTICIPATING IN OUR COMMUNITY WE ASK THAT YOU: ◦ REFRAIN FROM USING THE REPLY FUNCTION. ◦ AVOID POSTING NAKED LINKS. ◦ PROVIDE CONTEXT AND DISCUSSION POINTS FOR YOUR POSTS. ◦ READ OTHERS' COMMENTS USING THE PRINCIPLE OF CHARITY.



On scorn.

Admittedly, sometimes, it can feel good to lash out - especially when the topic is one about which we care dearly. Especially when we've been over it time and time again. Especially when we know that the other person is wrong. Scratching that itch, however, is the fastest way to drive any on-the-fence members straight into the arms of the anti-science side. If you feel a post or commenter is not using an evidence-based approach, then disprove the position with scientific evidence.

For those who are unsure of consensus issues, joining PWS for more information for themselves, family or friends: Welcome! We are here to provide evidence, not judgment, so you can come to your own conclusions.

For pro-science applicants: Sometimes it might feel as if you're being held to a higher standard (compared to members whose views on important consensus topics differ from the expected, science-based viewpoint). In fact, yes, you are, and the reasons for that answer the question of for what PWS and its members stand:

- PWS' mission is civil, scientific, evidence-based outreach. We are part of a larger group, "Pretty, Shiny Science," that includes the [Healthy Skepticism](#) and [The Science of Sex and Gender](#) forums.
- We cover important and timely parenting and pregnancy topics such as the research on pregnancy health and nutrition, childhood immunization, childhood illnesses and their treatments, the education system, discipline methods, behavioural issues, and developmental psychology.
- We are a safe place where those who are undecided or looking for answers for family and friends can review research that's presented in a respectful, evidence-based manner.
- We are a forum where members can discuss new research and research results. This allows for the exchange of questions, answers, anecdotes, opinions, and most importantly, science-based evidence.
- PWS is a place where, when a member is posting poor-quality evidence or claims, fellow members will explain - in a friendly manner - how to find good-quality evidence.
- We have the goal of making new science advocates, not new enemies.

One last point to consider.

When you talk to an "anti" in one thread, it can be viewed by 1000s of other members, many of whom have joined because they are seeking knowledge. When you are uncivil, these on-the-fence members see your tone and behavior, even if you were not addressing them. If it is more important to you to show up an "anti" than to connect with an undecided, then your goals are not aligned with those of the forum. Simply put, PWS might not be a good fit for you. We want to counter health "woo" with evidence, NOT insults. We want to help those with life-threatening illnesses, like diabetes and cancer, to choose evidence-based treatment



options at the advice of their MDs. We want to dispel the fear-based frenzies found on our personal facebook feeds. We think that this mission matters, and that's why we are here. We hope that it's why you're here, too.

A Rough Guide to TYPES OF SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE

Being able to evaluate the evidence behind a claim is important, but scientific evidence comes in a variety of forms. Here, the different types of scientific evidence are ranked and described, particularly those relevant to health and medicinal claims.

INCREASING STRENGTH OF EVIDENCE	
	ANECDOTAL & EXPERT OPINIONS (Anecdotal evidence is a person's own personal experience or view, not necessarily representative of typical experiences. An expert's stand-alone opinion, or that given in a written news article, are both considered weak forms of evidence without scientific studies to back them up.)
	ANIMAL & CELL STUDIES (experimental) (Animal research can be useful, and can predict effects also seen in humans. However, observed effects can also differ, so subsequent human trials are required before a particular effect can be said to be seen in humans. Tests on isolated cells can also produce different results to those in the body.)
	CASE REPORTS & CASE SERIES (observational) (A case report is a written record on a particular subject. Though low on the hierarchy of evidence, they can aid detection of new diseases, or side effects of treatments. A case series is similar, but tracks multiple subjects. Both types of study cannot prove causation, only correlation.)
	CASE-CONTROL STUDIES (observational) (Case control studies are retrospective, involving two groups of subjects, one with a particular condition or symptom, and one without. They then track back to determine an attribute or exposure that could have caused this. Again, these studies show correlation, but it is hard to prove causation.)
	COHORT STUDIES (observational) (A cohort study is similar to a case-control study. It involves selection of a group of people sharing a certain characteristic or treatment (e.g. exposure to a chemical), and compares them over time to a group of people who do not have this characteristic or treatment, noting any difference in outcome.)
	RANDOMISED CONTROLLED TRIALS (experimental) (Subjects are randomly assigned to a test group, which receives the treatment, or a control group, which commonly receives a placebo. In 'blind' trials, participants do not know which group they are in; in 'double blind' trials, the experimenters do not know either. Blinding trials helps remove bias.)
	SYSTEMATIC REVIEW (Systematic reviews draw on multiple randomised controlled trials to draw their conclusions, and also take into consideration the quality of the studies included. Reviews can help mitigate bias in individual studies and give us a more complete picture, making them the best form of evidence.)

Note that in certain cases, some of these types of evidence may not be possible to procure, for ethical or other reasons.

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Here is an introduction package that we use for all our forums. It includes information on the scientific method, finding high-quality sources, and using critical evaluation when presented with new information:

<https://goo.gl/AFo2ic>.

Please note that this forum is evidence-based. This means that we utilize the rules of scientific evidence, and we accept neither anecdote nor expert opinion as support for any claim or assertion made.

When making a declarative statement of fact, provide support for it. If you can't find support, you shouldn't make the claim.

*Chart compliments of [Compound Chem](http://www.compoundchem.com). Explanation of the types of scientific evidence is located [here](http://www.compoundchem.com).



Cheers, thanks, and welcome.

Penny Lane Handley

