



Executive Complaints Unit
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Mr David Keighley
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Via email: david.keighley@btclick.com

Ref: CAS-8372760

23 July 2026

Dear Mr Keighley

Everything Is Fake (and Nobody Cares) Radio 4, 6 April 2026

Thank you for your email with a complaint about an edition of **Everything Is Fake (and Nobody Cares)** about a scientific study, Serious Adverse Events of Special Interest Following mRNA Vaccination in Randomized Trials, which has been promulgated by Dr Aseem Malhotra to support his contention that mRNA Covid19 vaccines pose risks to health. The programme referred Dr Malhotra's claims to peers including Dr Victoria Male, an epidemiologist who was interviewed in the programme. She was sceptical about conclusions drawn from the research, saying that the findings were provisional and required further research, and giving her reasons. However the presenter went further than this, stating: *"The authors were specifically told to make it clear this paper should not be used to make the kind of claims Dr Malhotra is making"*.

You said, having referred to the [paper](#) in Vaccine which was discussed: *"The lead author disputes this and states that no such instruction appeared in the paper or peer-review process"*.

You have asked the Executive Complaints Unit to assess whether the programme met the standards of due accuracy in the programme's treatment of the paper and its findings, and due impartiality in its handling of Dr Aseem Malhotra's claims.

As to the programme's statement as quoted above, you were told at Stage 1 of the complaints process that it was *"based on a comparison of the pre- and post-peer reviewed versions of the paper"*.

I have referred to both versions of the paper. The most [recent](#) says: *"Our study was not designed to evaluate the overall harm-benefit of vaccination programs"*. However it does not say

whether the addition of this advice to readers accompanied advisory guidance to the authors. I have made inquiries about the wording in the programme, and I understand it was based on Dr Male's interview with the presenter. She has been approached for comment and says this:

I made this claim on the basis of a comparison between the pre- and post-peer review versions of the paper. The toned down claims appear only after peer review, so I think it's not unreasonable to assume – as I did – that the peer reviewers requested they be added. However, it is possible that during the peer review process, the authors independently decided that their original claims were overstated and made the changes without being asked to.

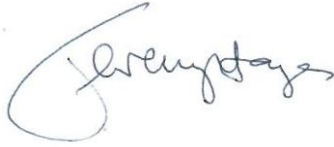
On that basis it is evidently conceded that “*the authors were specifically told to make it clear*” is an unverified claim. The programme has now been re-edited to remove the claim, which I think is appropriate.

In assessing whether this presentation amounts to a breach of the BBC's editorial standards, it should be borne in mind that there was an important qualification to the paper about the use of findings when making an “*overall harm-benefit*” determination, of the kind which Dr Malhotra has been asserting. It is also the case that the study, which was carried out in 2022, was succeeded by a number of randomised trials, such as [this](#), which did not replicate reported incidents of harm noted in the 2022 study. I think the doubts about the utility of the paper, expressed by Dr Male, were valid, and have indeed been echoed by other experts. On that basis, therefore, I do not think the sentence you identified would have given a materially misleading impression about the standing of its findings to listeners, even though the authors might regard it as giving an inaccurate account of how the post-peer review changes arose. I am therefore not upholding your complaint in relation to due accuracy.

On the question of the impartiality of the line adopted by the programme-makers you argue that it presented Dr Malhotra as “*the claimant to be corrected and institutional science as adjudicating authority*”. As Dr Malhotra's claims about mRNA vaccines were the basis for this episode, it was to be expected that the programme followed a method of claim followed by informed analysis. It is an important principle of the BBC's editorial standards on impartiality, when science-based assertions and claims are presented, that there is no requirement to give all views equal weight. I note, however, that the presenter, in the interests of fairness, did report criticism of his claims back to Dr Malhotra for a reaction. It was appropriate, in my judgment, to include the views of experts like Dr Male on the controversial question of the safety of mRNA vaccines. Accordingly I am not upholding your complaint in relation to due impartiality. There's no provision for further appeal against this decision within the BBC.

However, you may contact the broadcasting regulator, Ofcom, if you believe it failed to meet broadcasting standards. Information about lodging a complaint with Ofcom can be found [here](#).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jeremy Hayes', with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

Jeremy Hayes
Complaints Director