

December 10, 2021

This DA was submitted by Dr. Mylène Dandavino. I couldn't have said it better myself!

Leadership takes many forms, and does not necessarily come with official titles. This pandemic led to many members of our institution springing into action and be brought to light. For some, however, it meant more "spotlight" than others. I am referring to those that became faces, voices and words in the media to share information and combat misinformation. I am glad they took on that role, one that I, personally, could never have done. Although he is not the only one that went 'public', I would like to acknowledge the exceptional contributions of **Dr. Jesse Papenburg**.



Leaving work on September 20th, having just tuned in to the francophone channel Ici Radio Canada, I caught mid-way a live interview with Jesse discussing what to tell parents who are COVID vaccine hesitant with regards to 'why vaccinate their children'. I remember thinking how it was clear, to-the-point, and fact-based, and that I wish I could take notes as no parent could NOT be reassured with what this expert was proposing to tell them. I was so caught up in the content of the interview that it was only when the interview finished that I realized that the voice was familiar, and that the expert had been no other than our own Jesse Papenburg.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Jesse has done over 180 media interviews, with over 30 in the last couple of weeks alone (since Health Canada's approval for the Pfizer vaccine in 5-11 year olds). He has spoken to international (NBC, science.org, Wall Street Journal, Slate, National Public Radio, Consumer Reports, Agence France-Presse, Yahoo News, L'Humanité), national (CBC, CTV, Global News, RDI, Ici Radio-Canada, Globe & Mail, National Post), and local media outlets, in both official languages. The huge amount of time and effort required for this type of media outreach cannot be understated. We must acknowledge its value, not only for parents (especially now that vaccinating the maximum number of children is so critical) but also for MCH/MUHC public visibility.

Jesse's efforts are also valued by the MUHC Public Relations department, as written by Mrs. Christine Bouthillier, from Communications: "Dr. Jesse Papenburg has been a key partner for the media relations team since the beginning of the pandemic. Even with his busy schedule, juggling clinical care, research activities and family life, he never hesitates to make room for interviews. At a time when misinformation travels fast, it is more important than ever to give the public the right facts and explain them in an understandable way so that people can make informed decisions. Dr. Papenburg excels at this, and in both languages. We thank him warmly for his time and dedication."

So to Jesse, and to all the others who take the time to engage with the media to advocate on behalf of children in this never-ending pandemic, thank you for what you do!

Have a great weekend!

Beth Foster, MD, MSCE, FRCPC
Professor of Pediatrics

Chair, Dept. of Pediatrics McGill University
Pediatrician-in-Chief, Montreal Children's Hospital of the MUHC
Harvey Guyda Chair in Pediatrics