

# Officials Ignore Pesticides and Blame Alcohol and Biscuits for Rising Rates of Disease

By [Rosemary Mason](#) and [Colin Todhunter](#)

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*The information below and the quotes were taken from the 12-page report that accompanied **Rosemary Mason's** recent open letter to the Chief Medical Officer to England, **Sally Davies**. It can be accessed [here](#).*

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Campaigner and environmentalist Dr Rosemary Mason has written an open letter to the Chief Medical Officer of England, Sally Davies. In it, Mason states that none of the more than 400 pesticides that have been authorised in the UK have been tested for long-term actions on the brain: in the foetus, in children or in adults.

The UK Department of Health (DoH) has previously stated that pesticides are not its concern. But, according to Mason, they should be. She says that Theo Colborn's crucial research in the early 1990s showed that endocrine disrupters (EDCs) were changing humans and the environment, but this research was ignored by officials. Glyphosate, the most widespread herbicide in the world, is an EDC and a nervous system disrupting chemical.

In a book published in 1996, 'Our Stolen Future: How Man-made Chemicals are Threatening our Fertility, Intelligence and Survival', Colborn (d. 2014) and colleagues revealed the full horror of what was happening to the world as a result of contamination with EDCs. There was emerging scientific research about how a wide range of these chemicals can disrupt delicate hormone systems in humans. These systems play a critical role in processes ranging from human sexual development to behaviour, intelligence and the functioning of the immune system.

In addition to glyphosate, EDCs include polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). DDT, chlordane, lindane, aldrin, dieldrin, endrin, toxaphene, heptachlor, dioxin, atrazine and dacthal.

Colborn stated:

"The concentration of persistent chemicals can be magnified millions of times as they travel to the ends of the earth... Many chemicals that threaten the next generation have found their way into our bodies. There is no safe, uncontaminated place."

Mason says that Colborn predicted that this would involve sexual development and adds this is why certain people may be confused about their sexuality.

She says to Davies:

“You were appointed as interim CMO by David Cameron in June 2010; you became the permanent holder in 2011. Was that once you had assured him of your loyalty by not mentioning pesticides?”

She continues by saying:

“You did not train as a specialist in public health but as a consultant haematologist, specialising in haemoglobinopathies. You joined the Civil Service in 2004 and became Chief Scientific Adviser to the Health Secretary. Did David Cameron instruct Tracey Brown OBE from Sense about Science, a lobby organisation for GMO crops, to be your minder? When the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists published a paper saying that exposure to chemicals during pregnancy could damage the foetus, you and Tracey Brown publicly made fun of it.

“After that I wrote to you about the Faroes Statement: in 2007, twenty-five experts in environmental health from eleven countries (including from the UK) met on the Faroes and contributed to this statement: ‘The periods of embryonic, foetal and infant development are remarkably susceptible to environmental hazards. Toxic exposures to chemical pollutants during these windows of increased susceptibility can cause disease and disability in infants, children and across the entire span of human life.’ You asked Dr John Harrison from Public Health England to write to me to reassure me that there was no evidence that it was true.

“You made an announcement in 2011 that antibiotic resistance was an apocalyptic threat to humans and the issue should be added to the government’s [national risk register of civil emergencies](#)... When I informed you that one of glyphosate’s many actions was as an antibiotic, you ignored me. Dr Don Huber, a Plant Pathologist from Purdue University, Indiana, says that glyphosate is an antibiotic, an organic phosphonate, a growth regulator, a toxicant, a virulence enhancer and is persistent in the soil. It chelates (captures) and washes out the following minerals: boron, calcium, cobalt, copper, iron, potassium, magnesium, manganese, nickel and zinc.”

Mason doesn’t waste much time in drawing conclusions as to why her previous letters to Davies and other officials have been ignored or sidelined. She notes that between May 2010 and the end of 2013 the UK Department of Health alone had 130 meetings with representatives of industry and concludes that commercial interests are currently in control of key decisions about the public’s health.

In 2014, an open letter from America warned citizens, politicians and regulators in the UK and EU against adopting GM crops and glyphosate. It was endorsed by NGOs, scientists, anti-GM groups, celebrities, food manufacturers and others representing 60 million citizens in the US. Mason draws attention to the fact that the letter outlined eight independent papers describing environmental harm and six about the threat to human health.

But **David Cameron**, PM at the time, ignored it. The European Commission and the European Food Safety Authority also ignored it. Glyphosate was relicensed.

Mason asked relevant officials why the EFSA was regularly increasing the maximum residue

levels of glyphosate in foods at the request of Monsanto but has received no reply.

**Professor Philippe Grandjean**, the leader of the conference that issued the 'Faroes Statement', released the book: 'Only One Chance: How Environmental Pollution Impairs Brain Development - and How to Protect the Brains of the Next Generation' (2013). In reviewing the book, Theo Colbern said:

"This book is a huge gift to humankind from an eminent scientist. Grandjean tells the truth about how we have been ruining the brain power of each new generation and asks if there are still enough intelligent people in the world today to reverse the problem. I cannot rid myself of the idea that too many brains have been drained and society is beyond the point of no return. We must learn from the follies and scandals that Grandjean reveals and stop the chemical brain drain before it is too late."

### **But pesticides are ignored**

A key point that Mason wants to make to Davies is that lifestyle choices are not to blame for rising rates of diseases, cancer and obesity; these increases are the outcome of the toxic cocktails of pesticides and other chemicals we are consuming.

Mason says to Davies about the Chief Medical Officer for England's 2019 annual report:

"For your final report, you failed to mention many diseases afflicting people in the UK... You claim that you work independently and you are going to write about childhood obesity in September. But why did you collude with Cancer Research UK to blame the people for obesity?"

Not only did David Cameron ignore the 'Letter from America', he also appointed Michael Pragnell, founder of Syngenta and former Chairman of CropLife International, to the board of Cancer Research UK in 2010. He became Chairman in 2011. As of 2015, CropLife International's member list included [BASF](#), [Bayer CropScience](#), [Dow AgroSciences](#), [DuPont](#), [FMC Corp.](#), [Monsanto](#), [Sumitomo](#) and [Syngenta](#). Many of these make their own formulated glyphosate.

Mason says to Davies:

"CRUK, you, the Chief Medical Officer for England, and Public Health England, linked cancer to alcohol, obesity and smoking. You all blamed the people for 'lifestyle choices'. Where is the scientific evidence for this?"

Syngenta is a member of the European Glyphosate Task Force, which sought to renew (and succeeded) European glyphosate registration. Not surprisingly, Mason says, the CRUK website denies that there is any link between pesticides and cancer. Its website says the following about pesticides:

"For now, the evidence is not strong enough to give us any clear answers. But for individual pesticides, the evidence was either too weak to come to a conclusion, or only strong enough to suggest a "possible" effect. The scientific evidence on pesticides and cancer is still uncertain and more research is

needed in this area.”

Mason refers to a survey commissioned by CRUK, ‘People lack awareness of link between alcohol and cancer’, but asks what credible scientific evidence is there that alcohol causes seven different types of cancer and that obesity causes 13 different types of cancer? She concludes, none, and writes that certain top scientists have questioned (ridiculed) the messages being conveyed to the public about alcohol use.

In the Observer and the Guardian in July 2019, CRUK took out half-page advertisements stating that obesity (in huge letters) is a cause of cancer. In a smaller box, it was stated that, like smoking, obesity puts millions of adults at greater risk of cancer. Bus stops and advertising hoardings were replete with black text on a white background. The adverts invited people to fill in the blanks and spell out OBESITY, asking the public to ‘Guess what is the biggest preventable cause of cancer after smoking’.

Mason notes that CRUK has also paid for many TV adverts, describing how it looks after people with cancer and encourages donations from the public. It claims to have spent £42 million on information and influencing in 2018.

She says that the Department of Health’s School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme (SFVS) has residues of 123 different pesticides that seriously impact the gut microbiome. Mason states that obesity is associated with low diversity of bacteria in the microbiome and glyphosate destroys most of the beneficial bacteria and leaves the toxic bacteria behind. In effect, she argues (citing relevant studies) that Roundup (and other biocides) is a major cause of gross obesity, neuropsychiatric disorders and other chronic diseases including cancers, which are all on the rise, and adversely impacts brain development in children and adolescents.

She asks Davies:

“Why did you not attend the meeting in the Houses of Parliament on Roundup? If you were away, you have hundreds of staff in the DOH or Public Health England that could have deputised for you. Dr Don Huber, Emeritus Professor of Plant Pathology at Purdue University, Indiana, and one of four experts on Roundup, spoke at a meeting in the House of Commons on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2014 on the dangers of Roundup. In what was one of the most comprehensive meetings ever held in Europe on Glyphosate and Roundup, experts from around the World gathered in London to share their expertise with the media, members of a number of UK political parties, NGO representatives and members of the general public. EXCEPT THAT NONE OF THE MAINSTREAM MEDIA WAS PRESENT, NOR THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH NOR PUBLIC HEALTH ENGLAND. They are protecting the pesticides industry.”

Mason makes much of the very cosy relationship between the Murdoch media and successive governments in the UK and asks:

“Roundup weed killer is present in all our foods: why does the UK media not want us to know?”

She notes that women in the UK are being warned to cut back on sweet treats or risk [cancer](#). Sally Davies says women are consuming “two biscuits too much each day” and

should [lose weight](#). Davies says [obesity](#) will surpass smoking as the leading cause of cancer in women by 2043. Last year, official figures revealed 30 per cent of women in the UK are overweight and 27 per cent are obese. Obesity levels across all genders have risen from 15 per cent to 26 per cent since 1993.

But as Mason has shown time and again in her reports and open letters to officials, pesticides (notably glyphosate) are a key driver of obesity. Moreover, type 2 diabetes is closely associated with being very overweight. According to NHS data, almost four in five of 715 children suffering from it were also obese.

“Type 2 diabetes is a disaster for the child and their family and for the NHS,” says Graham MacGregor, a professor of cardiovascular health at Queen Mary University of London who is also the chair of the campaign group [Action on Sugar](#). “If a child gets type 2 diabetes, it’s condemning them to a lot of complications of that condition, such as blindness, amputations and kidney disease,” he said. “These figures are a sign that we are in a crisis and that the government doesn’t seem to be taking action, or not enough and not quickly enough. The UK obesity levels now exceed those of the US.”

Mason explains:

“I am one of the many British women in 2014-16 who were spending nearly 20 years of their life in poor health (19.3 years) while men spend just over 16 years in poor health. Spanish women live the longest, with UK longevity ranked 17th out of 28 EU nations, according to Public Health England’s annual health profile. Each year there are steady increases in the numbers of new cancers in the UK and increases in deaths from the same cancers, with no treatments making any difference to the numbers.”

She concludes:

“Britain and America are in the midst of a barely reported public health crisis. These countries are experiencing not merely a [slowdown in life expectancy](#), which in many other rich countries is [continuing to lengthen](#), but the start of an alarming increase in death rates across all our populations, men and women alike. We are needlessly allowing our people to die early.”

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**Colin Todhunter** is a frequent contributor to *Global Research* and *Asia-Pacific Research*.

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