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## **Plus ca change.....**

Margaret Williams

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On 26<sup>th</sup> January 2004 the London Evening Standard carried an article by Rob McNeil and Joe Murphy which revealed how Ministers had ignored many warnings about Professor Sir Roy Meadow and his unproven theories about the cause of multiple cot death.

If the name of another “expert professor” and another condition were to be substituted, the similarities to the current situation regarding ME/CFS are striking.

The article says:

“A former Government adviser today bitterly accused ministers of “ignoring” her warnings about the scandal of children being wrongly taken from their parents”.

“Childcare expert Jan Loxley told the Evening Standard she wrote to senior politicians three years ago to warn them of growing disquiet about the theories of paediatrician Sir Roy Meadow. She claimed ministers failed to take action.

“ ‘Not only has the Government refused to take notice of our advice about this, but they have taken a quantum leap toward enshrining Meadow’s flawed and dangerous theories as absolute fact’ said Mrs Loxley”.

“ ‘It is an outrage that nobody acted sooner, despite the piles of evidence’ ”.

“ ‘Despite the Government’s attempts to come over as sympathetic, they have still not removed the guidelines about Munchausen’s from their website’ ”.

Mrs Loxley refers to Government’s ‘unquestioning belief in Meadow’s ideas’.

“ ‘The letter I wrote to ministers in 2000 made it quite clear that a complete review needed to be undertaken, but instead of that the Government enshrined (Meadow’s views) further into policy by using a group of people, all of whom were believers in Meadow’s ideas, to review the guidelines’ ”.

The ME community might wish to take note, especially of the fact that, as of today, the NHS Information Authority still has “CFS” listed as a mental disorder on its website.