

# After a former member of New Zealand's Medical Council described bullying of the entire medical profession to conform to COVID edicts, media tells it like it is: the Salem Witch Trials or McCarthyism



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October 30, 2024

<https://centrist.co.nz/nz-medical-councils-covid-actions-look-like-an-historical-overreach/>

## NZ Medical Council's COVID actions look like an historical overreach



### In brief

- The NZ Medical Council (MCNZ) enforced strict COVID guidance, curbing doctors' freedom to discuss alternative views.
- This approach can be likened to historical witch hunts like Salem and McCarthyism.
- A former Council member testified to the "aggressive" punitive atmosphere of the Council.
- The culture of silencing dissent has got to increase mistrust in New Zealand's health sector.

### The spectre of historical hysteria

The New Zealand Medical Council's (MCNZ) **stance** towards doctors' questions or alternative views on COVID recalls infamous historical episodes of moral righteousness, driven by fervour and certainty that proved to be excessive...

**Salem's witch trials** in the 1690s and McCarthy's anti-communist trials in the 1950s shared in common a fear of "otherness" or perceived threat to societal order and cast suspicion on anyone with alternative beliefs. Similarly, the MCNZ condemned dissenters with comparable zeal over enforcement of their **Guidance Statement** creating a climate of rigid conformity.

## **Guidance or decree?**

The MCNZ issued a directive that doctors support the COVID vaccine and refrain from promoting alternative treatments. Public messages from the government reassured citizens they would receive unbiased advice from health professionals. Yet, the MCNZ directive effectively restricted the dialogue doctors could have with their patients. Here, the Council's control over medical speech begins to resemble the iron grip seen in McCarthy's infamous "**Red Scare**."

During McCarthyism, a mere association with an alternative view could lead to professional ruin. For some, merely exploring treatment alternatives became grounds for disciplinary action. Doctors who discussed COVID risks or proposed options like Vitamin D found themselves in the MCNZ's crosshairs.

By enforcing "guidance" that discouraged debate, the MCNZ introduced fear and mistrust into the medical profession. It had to have also added to the public's mistrust.

Richard Aston, a former Council member, testified about the punitive atmosphere, likening the response to dissent as "aggressive and disturbing."

## **Stifling dissent through conformity**

In Salem, innocuous traits were twisted into "evidence" of witchcraft. Under McCarthy, everyday conversations were grounds for suspicion. For MCNZ, the "evidence" was often no more than doctors' emails or public comments raising concerns over the government's COVID approach.

Even routine practices perceived as showing doubt left doctors subject to disciplinary action by the Council. An example is requesting a D-dimer blood analysis. This test has existed for decades to assist with finding blood clots. Yet, prescribing that test could

subject the wrong doctor to harassment. This is because some thought the D-dimer test may help identify a health problem caused by the COVID vaccine.

Aston described a culture shift where council members would mock dissenters as “tin foil hats” and conspiracy theorists, dismissing valid ethical questions regarding human rights or informed consent issues.

The Council’s shift recalls how societies in past rationalised group think to ensure conformity. This includes responses to health threats over the centuries, including **self whipping** as a defence to the Black Plague. While no one would suggest this level of ignorance exists today, there are similarities.

### Consequences of unchecked certainty

Public hysteria fuelling reckless accusations and the certainty of one “truth” left a legacy of regret in Salem and Washington.

While it is difficult to measure the MCNZ’s exact influence on overall trust levels, its actions during the pandemic align with the types of actions shown to “erode trust in government and provoke more resistance” to public health measures. The resultant **trust issues** have contributed to increased vaccine hesitancy and a decline in preventive care, while **worsening** the health workforce’s existing skill shortages.



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**Susan Pockett** Oct 30

Sadly i couldn't watch this, as anything to do with the Centrst website has always been greeted by my computer with an otherwise blank screen saying 403 Forbidden. However, I have known for some years now that the NZ Medical Council is a disgraceful bunch of mostly non-medics who simply follow NWO orders. I don't know why our new coalition govt doesn't fire them. Maybe they can't. In NZ democracy is still widely regarded as "so last-century dahlink", since Jabby got her claws on things.

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**Michael Edwards** Michael's Substack Oct 30

Those who refuse to learn from history are doomed to repeat it!!

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