

# kellybroganmd.com

A natural health website that has published false health claims, including that vaccines cause autism and that the COVID-19 pandemic was planned.



Proceed with caution: This website severely violates basic journalistic standards.

Score: 20/100

## Ownership and Financing

KellyBroganMD.com is owned and operated by Dr. Kelly Brogan, a psychiatrist who says on the website that she holds a bachelor's degree in systems neuroscience from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a medical degree from Cornell University Medical College.

Brogan did not respond to a request sent through her site's contact form to verify her credentials. However, a February 1999 news release from MIT named Brogan as a junior at the time, and an August 2004 release from Weill Cornell Medicine named her as a graduate of the school that year.

Brogan describes herself on her LinkedIn profile as a "holistic psychiatrist." A Bio & Credentials page on the website says that she has held board positions with organizations that advocate natural health remedies, including the website GreenMedInfo and the nonprofit Price-Pottenger Nutrition Foundation. Brogan has also written three books about treating depression with methods outside of conventional medicine.

The website does not run display advertisements. The website says on its Resources page that it receives "a small commission" for products purchased through affiliate links.

- ✗ Does not repeatedly publish false content (22points)
- ✗ Gathers and presents information responsibly (18)
- ✗ Regularly corrects or clarifies errors (12.5)
- ✓ Handles the difference between news and opinion responsibly (12.5)
- ✗ Avoids deceptive headlines (10)
- ✗ Website discloses ownership and financing (7.5)
- ✓ Clearly labels advertising (7.5)
- ✗ Reveals who's in charge, including any possible conflicts of interest (5)
- ✗ The site provides names of content creators, along with either contact or biographical information (5)

Criteria are listed in order of importance.

[More information.](#)

## Content

On its homepage, KellyBroganMD.com states that its mission "is to provide true informed consent around medication-based treatment, and empower individuals with tools for radical self-healing." The website's About page encourages readers to "own your body, free your mind" and "get happier and healthier — without drugs."

Sections include Health Topics, Books, Programs, Success Stories, and Resources. News articles, which generally appear in the Health Topics section, primarily cover holistic approaches to mental illness and health care approaches that avoid medication. Typical headlines include “5 Rules For Eating Away Your Depression,” “Fix Your Brain By Going Gluten-Free,” and “Deprescribing: Are You Better Off Medication Free?” Stories are generally not dated.

In a section titled Start Here, Brogan publishes guides available for download that she has written, such as “Change Your Food, Heal Your Mood,” and “4 Things To Check Before Taking An Antidepressant.” A Programs section provides details about Vital Mind Reset, an online program that Brogan launched to “learn what you can do to heal anxiety, depression, and stress — without drugs.” The Success Stories section houses testimonials from clients who have completed the VMR program.

Brogan also publishes a weekly newsletter with “hot-off-the-press science that supports holistic medicine and opportunities to level-up your wellness.”

---

#### Credibility

KellyBroganMD.com has repeatedly published false health claims, including about the COVID-19 pandemic.

For example, an undated article titled “Why We Stay Asleep When Covid-19 Is Trying to Wake Us Up,” made several false and unsubstantiated claims about the virus, including that the pandemic was planned in advance.

The article stated, “There were staged planning events in October 2019...well in advance of when this pandemic supposedly started.” The story singled out Event 201 and a coronavirus patent held by the U.K.-based Pirbright Institute as examples.

Event 201, a pandemic preparedness exercise facilitated by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, World Economic Forum, and Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security, did take place in October 2019 in New York City. However, the simulation used in the exercise involved a fictional coronavirus with different

characteristics than the COVID-19 virus. In the Event 201 simulation, for example, the virus originated on pig farms in Brazil, not in China.

“To be clear, the Center for Health Security and partners did not make a prediction during our tabletop exercise,” the Center said in a January 2020 statement. “For the scenario, we modeled a fictional coronavirus pandemic, but we explicitly stated that it was not a prediction.”

It is also true that the Pirbright Institute holds a patent for a coronavirus. However, the patent is not for the same novel coronavirus responsible for the 2020 pandemic. The patent is rather for an attenuated version of a coronavirus known as the avian infectious bronchitis virus, which affects chickens, not humans.

“Pirbright does not currently work with human coronaviruses,” the institute said in a January 2020 post on its website responding to the patent conspiracy theory. In a highlighted disclaimer at the top of the patent’s information page on Justia.com, the institute says that “this patent is NOT for the new COVID-19 virus.”

The same article made the unsubstantiated claim that doctors had inflated the COVID-19 death toll. “There’s a phrase we all keep hearing: *It doesn’t make sense*,” the article stated. “So what is it that doesn’t make sense? Is it that doctors are being told to code all deaths as covid without so much as the facade of testing when up to 99% of case fatalities are in individuals with multiple pre-existing conditions, the vast majority of them elderly?”

The misconception that “doctors are being told to code all deaths as covid” surfaced in April 2020 after the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), a division of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), released guidance stating that “COVID-19 should be reported on the death certificate for all decedents where the disease caused or is assumed to have caused or contributed to death.” The guidance, according to Sally Aiken, the president of the National Association of Medical Examiners, means that “if those

Individuals are positive for COVID-19 and have symptoms, COVID-19 is typically being listed on the death certificate as the cause of death, with their other diseases listed as contributory.”

But that does not mean that COVID-19 did not cause those patients’ deaths, according to Dr. Robert Anderson, chief of the mortality statistics branch at the NCHS. He told The Associated Press in August 2020 that it is rare for patients not to have multiple medical issues at the time of their death. “The underlying cause of death is the condition that began the chain of events that ultimately led to the person’s death,” he said.

According to the CDC, as of September 2020, 94 percent — not 99 percent, as the KellyBroganMd.com claim article claimed — of patients who died from the COVID-19 virus had pre-existing conditions that contributed to their deaths. “That does not mean that someone who has hypertension or diabetes who dies of COVID didn’t die of COVID-19. They did,” Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases, told ABC’s “Good Morning America.”

The site has also promoted the false claim that vaccines cause autism. In an undated article headlined “CDC: You’re Fired. Autism Coverup Exposed,” Brogan wrote, “As parents around the world have known for 7 decades, and basic science has supported, vaccines do cause autism. Despite the defiance of the CDC in its refusal to conduct that most basic of studies, a retrospective case-control investigation of autism rates in vaccinated versus unvaccinated children, science has been supporting the connection for years.”

The CDC and many other health and science authorities, including the U.K. National Health Service and the World Health Organization, have repeatedly stated that there is no link between vaccines and autism, based on an abundance of scientific evidence. On its website, the nonprofit Autism Science Foundation lists dozens of peer-reviewed studies published in reputable medical journals, all of which support the conclusion that autism and vaccines are not linked. “We’ve asked the autism vaccine question over

two dozen times and each time we get the same response: no relationship,” the Foundation says. “We need to move on.”

The website has promoted the false claim that type 1 diabetes — a chronic condition in which a patient is unable to produce enough insulin to keep their blood sugar in check — is curable. In an undated article titled “Beyond Genetics: Is Type 1 Diabetes a Lifestyle Disease?” Brogan wrote, “The conventional practice wisdom is that type 1 diabetes is ‘an incurable genetic disease,’ implying that its sufferers will be condemned to a lifetime of daily blood glucose checks and insulin doses. But what if I told you that T1D could be reversed with diet and lifestyle changes?”

The story said that understanding the relationship between the gut, brain, hormones, and immune system is “the secret to understanding how diet and lifestyle can reverse diabetes.”

According to health experts including those at the Mayo Clinic, Johns Hopkins University, Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, and the CDC, type 1 diabetes is an incurable condition. Johns Hopkins writes on its website that “right now there is no way to prevent type 1 diabetes,” although patients can mitigate the disease by controlling their blood sugar, treating high blood pressure, losing excess weight, and abstaining from smoking. The CDC says on its website that the development of type 1 diabetes can stem from genetic traits and environmental triggers such as viruses, but “diet and lifestyle habits don’t cause type 1 diabetes.”

In an undated story headlined “The Benefits of Coffee Enemas,” the website promoted the potentially dangerous practice of using coffee enemas. Contributing writer Linda Isaacs extolled the benefits of the technique in the article, writing, “I felt much better when I did them, so much better that as a sleep-deprived intern, I was willing to get up a little earlier every day to give myself a coffee enema before heading to the hospital. Now, I recommend them to my patients.”

The article cited studies that it claimed showed the treatment worked, but no study that had been published after 1950. And while the article said that “some physicians describe them as dangerous,” it did not detail the potential hazards of enemas.

The Gastrointestinal Society, a Canadian charity, writes on its website that “while enemas definitely have their uses, there aren’t many situations where they are necessary...It is important to note that in the past century, no researchers have published any quality studies showing that coffee enemas can improve health.” Mayo Clinic wrote in a June 2020 article on its website that coffee enemas “have been linked to several deaths” as well as side effects such as cramping, bloating, diarrhea, and vomiting.

KellyBroganMD.com also misrepresented research in an undated story titled “Depression Caused by Genetics? Most Likely Not.” The article used a study published in the American Journal of Psychiatry in March 2019 to bolster its claim that “the answers to questions about the origins of depression are not in our DNA.”

“Led by Richard Border and Dr. Matthew Keller, the research team suggested that the field should abandon the idea that depression is genetic,” the article said.

Border and Keller’s team did not suggest that scientists “should abandon the idea that depression is genetic.” Rather, the study — which was, as Brogan’s article noted, “the most comprehensive and well-powered investigation of historical candidate polymorphism and candidate gene hypothesis in depression to date” — dismissed the idea that a set of “depression genes” dictate a person’s susceptibility to depressive disorders. The researchers studied the 18 most highly studied candidate genes for depression and found that they were no more linked to the condition than random genes.

“We are not saying that depression is not heritable. It is,” Keller, a professor at the University of Colorado at Boulder, said in an April 2019 news release from the

university. “What we are saying is that depression is influenced by many, many variants, and individually each of those has a miniscule effect.”

Stanford Medicine reports on its website that people with parents or siblings who have major depression are two to three times more likely to develop depression. The National Institutes of Health says on its website that “it is likely that environmental conditions interact with genetic factors to determine the overall risk of developing this disease.”

Because KellyBroganMD.com has repeatedly published false or misleading information, including about vaccines and COVID-19, NewsGuard has determined that the website repeatedly publishes false content, does not gather and present information responsibly, and does not avoid the use of deceptive headlines.

The site does not publish a corrections policy, and NewsGuard was unable to find any corrections.

Three messages sent to KellyBroganMD.com by NewsGuard through the site’s contact form, inquiring about its corrections policy, examples of false and misleading information, and deceptive headlines, were not returned.

Most articles on the website include opinionated language that reflect the website’s belief in holistic treatments and natural health. The website clearly discloses its viewpoint, including on the homepage, where it says, “Our mission is to provide true informed consent around medication-based treatment, and empower individuals with tools for radical self-healing.” Brogan also writes on the website’s About page, “I help women break down the myths and misconceptions of an outdated and broken health care system that is keeping them sick, confused, and dependent.”

Because KellyBroganMD.com clearly discloses its viewpoint as a natural health advocacy site, NewsGuard has determined that the website does not handle the difference between news and opinion irresponsibly.

---

## Transparency

KellyBroganMD.com only discloses that it “is owned and operated by Kelly Brogan, MD” on its Terms of Service page, which does not meet NewsGuard’s standard for disclosing ownership in a user-friendly manner.

The site does not publish information about its editorial leadership or content creators. Brogan’s biography and credentials are listed under the site’s About section, and a Contact page invites users to contact the site for consultations with Brogan or to buy her products. However, the website does not disclose who is in charge of the editorial content.

Articles are attributed either to the “Kelly Brogan MD Team,” to Brogan, or to outside contributors. No biographical or contact information is provided for them, which does not meet NewsGuard’s standard for providing information about content creators.

The website does not run display advertisements or sponsored content. However, Brogan discloses on the Resources page that the page “contains affiliate links to products and services that Dr. Kelly Brogan has personally vetted and feels confident recommending to her patients and followers.” Products on the page include food products and supplements, educational resources, and household products, and either link to an Amazon page for the product or the company’s site itself. Brogan’s disclaimer, which says that she might receive “a small commission” for purchases through affiliate links, is published at the bottom of the page.

Three messages sent by NewsGuard through the contact form, asking about the website’s lack of disclosure of ownership, editorial leadership, and lack of information about content creators, were not returned.

---

## History

According to internet records, the domain for KellyBroganMD.com was first registered in May 2008.

**Written by:** [Anicka Slachta](#)

**Edited by:** [Amy Westfeldt](#)

**Send feedback to NewsGuard:**[Click Here](#)

## Sources

---

### Ownership and Financing

<https://kellybroganmd.com/terms-of-service/>  
<https://kellybroganmd.com/about/bio/>  
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/kellybroganmd/>  
<https://kellybroganmd.com/resources/>  
<https://news.weill.cornell.edu/news/2004/08/152-degrees-presented-at-2004-commencement>  
<https://news.mit.edu/1999/burchard-0203>

---

### Content

<https://kellybroganmd.com>  
<https://kellybroganmd.com/resources/>  
<https://kellybroganmd.com/kb-approved-paleo-pancakes/>  
<https://kellybroganmd.com/kb-approved-paleo-pancakes/>  
<https://kellybroganmd.com/kb-mamas-meat-sauce-recipe/>  
<https://kellybroganmd.com/go-gluten-free-fix-your-brain/>  
<https://kellybroganmd.com/deprescribing-are-you-better-off-medication-free/>  
<https://kellybroganmd.com/5-rules-for-eating-away-your-depression/>  
<https://us7.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=12bbf28aa99bdf62c30e5c10c&id=d0f977a8c5>  
<https://kellybroganmd.com/downloads/>  
<https://kellybroganmd.com/vital-mind-reset-interest/>

---

### Credibility

<https://kellybroganmd.com/depression-caused-by-genetics-most-likely-not/>  
<https://kellybroganmd.com/depression-is-the-medicine/>  
<https://kellybroganmd.com/the-drug-free-solution-to-ending-depression/>  
<https://ajp.psychiatryonline.org/doi/10.1176/appi.ajp.2018.18070881>  
<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2019/04/190402164517.htm>  
<https://med.stanford.edu/depressiongenetics/mddandgenes.html>  
<https://ghr.nlm.nih.gov/condition/depression#genes>  
<https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/what-causes-depression>  
<https://kellybroganmd.com/beyond-genetics-is-type-1-diabetes-a-lifestyle-disease/>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/type-1-diabetes/symptoms-causes/syc-20353011>

[https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/diabetes/diabetes\\_education/patient\\_education\\_material/diabetes\\_mellitus\\_type1.pdf](https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/diabetes/diabetes_education/patient_education_material/diabetes_mellitus_type1.pdf)

<https://www.chla.org/blog/health-and-safety-tips/symptoms-treatment-and-prevention-type-1-diabetes>

<https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/type1.html>

<https://kellybroganmd.com/cdc-youre-fired-autism-coverup-exposed/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/mmr-vaccine/>

[http://www.euro.who.int/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/339620/Myths-and-facts.pdf?ua=1](http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/339620/Myths-and-facts.pdf?ua=1)

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/concerns/autism.html>

!

<https://autismsciencefoundation.org/what-is-autism/autism-and-vaccines/>

<https://kellybroganmd.com/the-benefits-of-coffee-enemas/>

<https://badgut.org/information-centre/a-z-digestive-topics/enemas/>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/consumer-health/expert-answers/colon-cleansing/faq-20058435>

<https://www.mskcc.org/cancer-care/integrative-medicine/herbs/gerson-regimen>

<https://kellybroganmd.com/why-we-stay-asleep-when-covid-19-is-trying-to-wake-us-up/>

<https://www.centerforhealthsecurity.org/event201/>

<http://www.centerforhealthsecurity.org/newsroom/center-news/2020-01-24-Statement-of-Clarification-Event201.html>

<https://www.factcheck.org/2020/01/new-coronavirus-wasnt-predicted-in-simulation/>

<https://fullfact.org/health/event-201-coronavirus-pandemic/>

<https://patents.justia.com/patent/10130701>

<https://www.pirbright.ac.uk/news/2020/01/pirbright%E2%80%99s-livestock-coronavirus-research-%E2%80%93-your-questions-answered>

<https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2020/apr/23/facebook-posts/gates-foundation-does-not-have-patent-coronavirus/>

<https://www.snopes.com/ap/2020/01/23/patents-being-shared-online-are-not-related-to-new-virus-in-china/>  
<https://www.factcheck.org/2020/01/social-media-posts-spread-bogus-coronavirus-conspiracy-theory/>  
<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2768533>  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/cloth-face-covering.pdf>  
<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/factcheck/2020/06/11/fact-check-n-95-filters-not-too-large-stop-covid-19-particles/5343537002/>  
<https://www.cebm.net/covid-19/what-is-the-efficacy-of-standard-face-masks-compared-to-respirator-masks-in-preventing-covid-type-respiratory-illnesses-in-primary-care-staff/>  
[https://www.ohsu.edu/sites/default/files/2020-03/Proposed%20Solution%20for%20face%20mask%20reuse\\_Final%20%28web%29.pdf](https://www.ohsu.edu/sites/default/files/2020-03/Proposed%20Solution%20for%20face%20mask%20reuse_Final%20%28web%29.pdf)  
<https://www.thestreet.com/video/dr-fauci-masks-changing-directive-coronavirus>  
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-vice-president-pence-members-coronavirus-task-force-press-briefing-18/>  
<https://www.factcheck.org/2020/05/outdated-fauci-video-on-face-masks-shared-out-of-context/>  
<https://kellybroganmd.com/about/>  
<https://kellybroganmd.com>  
<https://web.archive.org/web/20200902174043/https://kellybroganmd.com/why-we-stay-asleep-when-covid-19-is-trying-to-wake-us-up/>  
<https://web.archive.org/web/20200902174152/https://kellybroganmd.com/cdc-youre-fired-autism-coverup-exposed/>  
<https://web.archive.org/web/20200902174429/https://kellybroganmd.com/beyond-genetics-is-type-1-diabetes-a-lifestyle-disease/>  
<https://web.archive.org/web/20200902175028/https://kellybroganmd.com/the-benefits-of-coffee-enemas/>  
<https://web.archive.org/web/20200902181226/https://kellybroganmd.com/depression-caused-by-genetics-most-likely-not/>

<https://kellybroganmd.com/resources/>

<https://kellybroganmd.com/5-foods-that-can-cause-depression/>

<https://kellybroganmd.com/why-being-emotional-is-actually-good-for-us/>

<https://kellybroganmd.com/intimacy/>

<https://kellybroganmd.com/contact/>

---

History

<https://lookup.icann.org/lookup>