

Wednesday June 7 2023

**‘MEADOW’S LAW’ CASE**
Sir, It is difficult to even begin to imagine the anguish experienced by Kathleen Folbigg experiencing the death of four children and then being falsely imprisoned for their murder (“[Mother jailed for killing her four babies is pardoned](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/kathleen-folbigg-woman-who-denies-killing-her-four-babies-is-freed-tskg2sqf3)”, Jun 6). Roy Meadow was statistically correct in claiming that when three extremely rare events occur together this is overwhelmingly likely to be due to a specific cause rather than chance, famously paraphrased by Ian Fleming as: “Once is happenstance. Twice is coincidence. The third time it’s enemy action.” Meadow’s failure was to describe the cause of multiple cot deaths as murder unless proven otherwise — even in the absence of medical evidence. This has now been rightfully discredited and hence miscarriages of justice based on this false logic are not likely to recur.

Of continuing concern is that Meadow’s standing in the medical and legal worlds of the time meant that he was not, or could not, be suitably challenged by cross-examination or the evidence of other witnesses. Distinguishing fact from opinion and respect from reverence is a daily challenge for all involved in medico-legal work, to ensure that justice prevails. **Anthony Cohn**
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