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THE

MMR judge faces probe over brother's link to vaccine firm

YOU MIGHT have thought a judge presented with a case regarding MMR vaccines and the link to autism would declare that his brother was a director of MMR vaccine manufacturer Glaxo SmithKline Beecham. But you would be wrong.

Sir Nigel Davis was the judge who, three years ago, rejected an appeal by MMR vaccine litigants against the decision not to award funding for their legal campaign. But he failed to mention his interests in the subject.

Now, complaints against him are being filed to the Office for Judicial Complaints, which investigates allegations of any questionable conduct by judges, coroners and magistrates.

Davis's brother, Sir Crispin Davis, was appointed a non-executive director of drugs multinational Glaxo Smith Kline in 2003, a year before the appeal came to court. Asked why Sir Nigel did not declare this, his spokesman said: "The possibility of any conflict of interest arising from his brother's position did not occur to him."

But Sir Crispin's potential links with MMR vaccines goes back longer than that, as since 1999 he had been CEO of Reed Elsevier, the publishing company which owns *The Lancet* magazine.

Although *The Lancet* had originally published research into the links between autism and MMR by Dr Andrew Wakefield in 1998, by 2004 the magazine regretted ever having done so. *The Lancet*



**Facing official judicial inquiry:
Nigel Davis and brother Crispin**

announced its change of heart only the week before Sir Nigel was due to make his decision on the MMR litigants' appeal, sparking a sudden backlash against the theory in the media, and prompting the Prime Minister to say "There is absolutely no evidence to support this link between MMR and autism".

The quashing of the MMR litigants' case would have been a huge relief to the government, who could have faced massive pay outs had they successfully sued the drugs companies over the effects of MMR.

Sir Crispin Davis was knighted by Blair's government in June 2004, only four months after *The Lancet* article was published.

Father-in-law's blast at George