### Summary Comparison of Traits of Autism and Mercury Poisoning

#### Psychiatric Disturbances
- Social deficits, shyness, social withdrawal
- Repetitive, perseverative, stereotypic behaviors; obsessive-compulsive tendencies
- Depression; depressive traits, mood swings, flat affect; impaired face recognition
- Anxiety; schizoid tendencies; irrational fears
- Irritability, aggression, temper tantrums
- Lacks eye contact; impaired visual fixation (Mercury)/problems in joint attention (Autism)

#### Speech and Language Deficits
- Loss of speech, delayed language, failure to develop speech
- Dysarthria; articulation; articulation problems
- Speech comprehension deficits
- Verbalizing and word retrieval problems (mercury); echolalia, word use and pragmatic errors (Autism)

#### Sensory Abnormalities
- Abnormal sensation in mouth and extremities
- Sound sensitivity; mild to profound hearing loss
- Abnormal touch sensations; touch aversion
- Over-sensitivity to light, blurred vision

#### Motor Disorders
- Flapping, myoclonal jerks, choreiform movements, circling, rocking, toe walking, unusual postures
- Deficits in eye-hand coordination; limb apraxia; intention tremors (mercury)/problems with intentional movement or imitation (Autism)
- Abnormal gait and posture, clumsiness and in coordination; difficulties sitting, lying, crawling, and walking problem on one side of body.

#### Cognitive Impairments
- Borderline intelligence, mental retardation – some cases reversible
- Poor concentration, attention response inhibition (mercury)/shifting attention (Autism)
- Uneven performance on IQ subtests; verbal IQ higher than performance IQ
- Poor short term, verbal and auditory memory
- Poor visual and perceptual motor skills; impairment in simple reaction time (mercury)/lower performance on timed tests (Autism)
- Deficits in understanding abstract ideas & symbolism; degeneration of higher mental powers (mercury)/sequencing, planning and organizing (autism); difficulty carrying out complex commands

#### Unusual Behaviors
- Self-Injurious behavior e.g. head banging
- ADHD traits
- Agitation, unprovoked crying, grimacing, staring spells
- Sleep difficulties

#### Physical Disturbances
- Hyper-hypotonia; abnormal reflexes; decreased muscle strength, especially upper body; incontinence; problems chewing, swallowing
- Rashes, dermatitis, eczema, itching
- Diarrhea; abdominal pain/discomfort, constipation, ‘colitis’
- Anorexia, nausea (mercury), vomiting (autism); poor appetite (mercury)/restricted diet (Autism)
- Lesions of ileum and colon; increased gut permeability