

Exposure to mercury linked to neurobehavioral disease epidemic in children

By Curt Andersen
News-Chronicle

The recent furor over the use of mercury in vaccines for children has gotten my attention. I really want to believe that all the money we spend for an agency like the Center For Disease Control (CDC) is doing some good, and yet there is troubling information that casts a long shadow over this organization.

Many people are surprised to hear that mercury is still used in vaccines for anyone, let alone little children, whose tolerance for such potent neurotoxins is very low. I was even able to find Merthiolate (the trade name for Thimerosal) antiseptic available on the Web, and I suspect there is still lots of it in the back of medicine chests all over the country.

Heavy metal toxicity has been studied for years. Recently, a group of parents of autistic children have discovered what appears to be selective use of data to eliminate the associations in earlier studies between autism and vaccines containing mercury.

Mercury is recognized as a dangerous neurotoxin, and ethyl mercury is used in Thimerosal, a preservative used in numerous vaccines. During the 1990's, several more vaccines were added to the list of mandatory vaccines, but no one at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) had done the simple addition that would show that tiny two-month old babies were then getting up to 62.5 micrograms of mercury, nearly 118 times the EPA's limit for daily exposure for an adult. Tests of baby teeth have shown very high levels of mercury after inoculations at that age. There is a four to one ratio of boys to girls affected by autism-the same ratio applies to mercury poisoning. Testosterone may be a factor in the different ratios. Exposure to mercury is linked to an epidemic of neurobehavioral disease in children, e.g. ADHD, Autism, and learning disabilities - one out of every six children in the US is now affected.

In Missouri, legislation was debated during the last legislative session in Jefferson City for a statewide ban on all mercury-containing vaccines for children under the age of eight. A filibuster stopped action on this bill, but it will come up again in the fall.

In a letter to the CDC, U.S. Rep. Dave Weldon, MD, (Rep. - FL) stated: "I am a strong supporter of childhood vaccinations and know that they have saved us from considerable death and suffering. A key part of our vaccination program is to ensure that we do everything possible to ensure that these vaccines, which are mandatory, are as safe as possible. We must fully disclose adverse events. Anything less than this undermines public confidence."

"I found a disturbing pattern which merits a thorough, open, timely, and independent review by researchers outside of the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Health and Human Services (HHS), the vaccine industry, and others with a conflict of interest in vaccine related issues (including many in University settings who may have conflicts)."

"Furthermore, the lead author of the article, Dr. Thomas Verstraeten, worked for the CDC until he left over two years ago to work in Belgium for GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), a vaccine manufacturer facing liability over Thimerosal Containing Vaccines (TCVs). In violation of their own standards of conduct, Pediatrics failed to disclose that Dr. Verstraeten is employed by GSK and incorrectly identifies him as an employee of the CDC. This revelation undermines this study further."

There are three large industries still dealing with mercury. Coal-fired power plants are one of the largest sources of mercury releases. Another group includes weapons manufacturers. Neither is in a big hurry to find ways to eliminate mercury from their operations...too costly, they say. The last group is known as "Big Pharma"...the drug industry...you know, the ones who have been ripping you off on prescription medicines that were at least partially developed at universities your tax dollars supported.

From the Green Bay News-Chronicle

President Bush signed into law a bill that establishes a Department of Homeland Security. According to Bob Herbert, columnist for the New York Times, "Buried in this massive bill, snuck into it in the dark of night by persons unknown (actually, it's fair to say by Republican persons unknown), was a provision that - incredibly - will protect Eli Lilly and a few other big pharmaceutical outfits from lawsuits by parents who believe their children were harmed by Thimerosal." House Majority Leader Dick Armey later admitted that he inserted the language and is proud of it. Senator John McCain of Arizona said, "This language will primarily benefit large brand-name pharmaceutical companies which produce additives to children's vaccines - with substantial benefit to one company in particular. It has no bearing whatsoever on domestic security." And yet, the bill is law. Armey says the White House instructed him to insert the language at the last minute to avoid debate. This section was repealed following efforts of parents all over the nation.

Research from scientists without ties to the drug companies overwhelmingly supports a link between Thimerosal and neurodevelopmental disorders. There are raised eyebrows about the family-like, Buddy-Buddy Protection System regarding lawsuits against predatory drug companies.

Congressman Dave Weldon, M.D., has introduced HR 4169, which will ban Thimerosal from vaccines nationwide. Representative Weldon may not know that one manufacturer of Thimerosal, Eli Lilly, has a very close relationship with the Bush family. George H.W. Bush served on the Eli Lilly board in the 1970's, and White House budget director, Mitch Daniels, former director of the Office of Management and Budget under G.W. Bush, was once an Eli Lilly executive. Sidney Taurel, Eli Lilly CEO, serves on the president's Homeland Security Advisory Council. How chummy it must be.

On top of that, numerous legislators own millions of dollars' worth of stocks in drug companies...just in case you were wondering why you are still paying out the snoot for prescription medicine and why over 44% of American people are uninsured while untold millions are one step away from being uninsured. There are no ethics rules or laws that prohibit stock ownership by legislators. What would ordinarily be considered conflict of interest in any jerkwater town is A-OK for Washington fatcats.

We are surrounded by mercury pollution. Some of the mercury comes from distant volcanoes, some from improper storage or handling, much of it from the burning of coal, and some from forest fires. (There appears to be a link between the burning of coal and the dispersal of mercury, which is deposited all over the planet, and its re-release during forest fires.)

Following an industrial spill of mercury in Minimata Bay, Japan in the 1950s, the effects of the potent neurotoxin were quickly obvious in neurological damage inflicted on children whose mothers had eaten fish contaminated by mercury from those waters. Mercury becomes most dangerous when ionic mercury is deposited onto soils or water bodies and becomes methylated during microbial or abiotic processes. Methyl mercury, the neurotoxic form, enters the food chain and becomes concentrated at higher and higher levels as larger fish and mammals eat smaller fish and biota. According to some studies, ethyl mercury is equally or perhaps more neurotoxic than methyl mercury. There was also ethyl mercury contamination in Minimata, suspected (but not yet confirmed) to be due to discharge from a Thimerosal-producing facility.

In the United States, over the last several decades, concerns about elevated mercury levels have led the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to issue warnings to vulnerable populations, such as pregnant women and small children, to limit consumption of fish, especially from the Great Lakes. This past December, EPA recommended that mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants be dramatically reduced. Even the normally environmentally flaccid Bush administration has included mercury on the list of pollutants it is considering for increased regulation. Most industrial sources of mercury have been phased out in the United States, but a few continue, including light switches, antibiotic tinctures like Mercurochrome and Merthiolate, dental amalgam, and thermometers. Mercury was used as a fungicide until the early 1970's, at which point its use was banned in the USA.

While the livers of mammals, including humans, can process small amounts of mercury, it becomes toxic at high doses, and has dire effects on children's tiny bodies. Victorian hat makers, like Lewis Carroll's

From the Green Bay News-Chronicle

fictional character, The Mad Hatter, suffered from mercury poisoning. Gold miners are exposed to toxic levels of mercury because it is used as an amalgam for extraction of gold and silver.

Mercury, also known as quicksilver, comes from cinnabar ore, which is also known as vermillion, a bright red ore that was formerly used as a dye. Mercury was smelted in huge furnaces. Those who worked around the furnaces often became "salivated," meaning they produced copious amounts of saliva. Most veteran furnace workers had no teeth and developed chronic respiratory problems from breathing mercury fumes. Others who breathed the fumes during the smelting process subsequently suffered from loss of hair and teeth. Extensive exposure sometimes resulted in insanity.

I don't know if I could get any more cynical about the current administration. No matter how hard I try, no matter how much I want to believe they're at least trying to do a good job, it just doesn't smell like it's working for us. It's more like it's working against us...us being the citizens of this country, including those faithful sheep who still defend the Bush Administration.

I already know the Environmental Protection Agency has been knee-capped. I've seen it in their disregard of pollution problems in the Green Bay area. I can see they've been politically interfered with, and most likely by the people who would have to pay for any cleanup. I have seen it in the ultimate lack of caring for first responders after the 9-11 attack when EPA said the air around the World Trade Center was safe to breathe, when it was actually dangerously toxic.

In the 110-story, twin-tower World Trade Center, there were about 1 million fluorescent light bulbs, plus the mercury in the millions of batteries in phones, dental amalgams (of the victims), paints, surge protectors, computerized devices, clocks, etc. When the towers came crashing down into a flaming pile, all that mercury was released into the air of Manhattan. The air was toxic for first responders...firemen tested positive for mercury months later. It might have even affected George W. Bush when he visited Ground Zero on Day Three, but didn't lift a finger to help.

We are awash in mercury, and so it would seem intelligent to move towards greater restrictions on mercury, whether from mercury products or discharges. Ask yourself what President Bush has done to save children from this fate. Answer: nothing. To Bush, once they're born, they're on their own.