

# THE HISTORY OF VACCINATIONS IN THE LIGHT OF THE AUTISM EPIDEMIC

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Autism has been characterized as a behavioral disorder since it was first described by Leo Kanner in 1943. The number of autistic children has increased over the last decade. The incidence of autism was 1 in 10 000 before the 1970s and has steadily increased to 1 in 150 in 2008 with a male:female predominance of 4:1. The cause of this epidemic has remained unknown, but several hypotheses have been studied. Many of these suggest an environmental trigger, such as the ethyl mercury contained in the preservative thimerosal, which has been used in vaccines since 1931. Other possible triggers associated with vaccinations are chemical toxins and live viruses. James has published studies suggesting a genetic predisposition in the families of autistic children, exposing them to a deficiency in

glutathione and an inability to detoxify heavy metals. Vargas has shown autism to encompass ongoing inflammation in the brains of autistic children. The Hannah Poling vaccine decision was a landmark case. Poling's family was awarded funds for ongoing medical care of an autistic child who was found to have mitochondrial dysfunction exacerbated by vaccines that left her with autistic behavior and seizures. Several studies have emerged supporting the fact that a significant number of autistic children do have mitochondrial dysfunction. The impact that the Poling case will have on the ability of parents of autistic children to gain access to funds to enable them to properly care for their children remains to be seen. (*Altern Ther Health Med.* 2008;14(6):54-57.)

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**E**nglish scientist Edward Jenner used a scientific approach to vaccination in the 18th century by inoculating people with cowpox to protect them against smallpox. This strategy helped but was short-lived because of the possibility of contamination. Louis Pasteur developed the first rabies vaccine for humans in 1885 and introduced the concept of attenuation or weakening the virus in the vaccine to avoid injuring the recipient.

The polio vaccines by Sabin and Salk followed. The injectable vaccine was used in 1955, sparking the use of mass vaccination in a free program for the public through the Poliomyelitis Vaccination Assistance Act. From 1906 to 1946, the diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis vaccines were developed. The DTP combination vaccine was made available to the public in 1946.<sup>1</sup>

The measles vaccine became available in 1963, followed in 1968 by the mumps vaccine and in 1969 by the rubella, or German measles, vaccine. Pneumococcal vaccine became available in 1978, and in 1979 the measles, mumps, and rubella vaccines were marketed as the combination MMR. The 1980s brought into use the hepatitis B and *Haemophilus influenzae* vaccines.

In 1991, the recombinant hepatitis B vaccine was recommended for use in newborns within 24 hours of birth. Also in 1991, the hepatitis B, *Haemophilus influenzae* B, and DTP vaccines were given

together to children during the same office visit. All 3 of these contained the preservative thimerosal, which contained ethyl mercury. Additionally, administration of the Rho (D) immune globulin given to Rho (D) negative mothers was moved from postbirth to the 28th week of gestation. The immune globulin contained thimerosal until 2002. From 1991 to 1999, children inadvertently received up to 125 times the safe level of mercury recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); this number is determined by the oral methylmercury standard on any given vaccine day that multiple vaccines were given. This level exceeded not only the EPA standard but also the safety standards of the US Food and Drug Administration, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, and the World Health Organization.

## HISTORY OF AUTISM

Autism was first described by psychiatrist Leo Kanner, MD, in 1943 as a behavioral disorder of children.<sup>4</sup> Around the same time, Hans Asperger was writing about children who had similar symptoms but no compromised speech. Many professionals and parents of autistic children have watched the number of autistic children rise to epidemic proportions while the toxic levels of ethyl mercury and other toxins persist in vaccines.

Autism has been classified by the disciplines of medicine as a psychiatric illness.<sup>2</sup> Recently, autistic children have displayed symptoms of disease in many of the bodily systems. These include but are not limited to the gastrointestinal, neurological, and immune systems. In many cases there has been a regression in development closely following a round of vaccinations. The vaccinations in question contained a combination of thimerosal, aluminum, live viruses,