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## CDC Knew of Potential Link between Vaccines, Autism

By [Melissa Ross](#)  
First Coast News

Five-year-old Ryan Anderson of Jacksonville Beach is an animated, happy child.

But that wasn't always the case.

"His course of deterioration from a happy, developmentally appropriate child to the problems he began to develop, started right after he received the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine," says Ryan's father, Bruce Anderson.

Now, several therapies are underway to restore Ryan's cognitive and behavioral development, which began to show significant impairment at age 18 months. Ryan also presents evidence of a persistent, active measles virus.

Ryan's doctor, Jeff Bradstreet of Melbourne, is a specialist in autism-related disorders. Using clinical diagnostic testing, he has documented a genetic defect in children that Ryan carries. That defect, says Bradstreet, made him vulnerable to a preservative in his vaccinations.

The preservative is called thimerosal, and it contains mercury, a known neuro-toxin. Until just a few years ago, children who received a full schedule of vaccinations were injected with mercury in amounts far exceeding EPA guidelines. Bradstreet says some children's bodies just can't handle the onslaught of the toxin.

"There are children who don't detox heavy metals well.. the more mercury we expose them to the more problems they're going to have," Bradstreet says.

The growing controversy over thimerosal has contributed to its removal from many childhood vaccines, beginning in the late 1990's. But it is still present in some vaccinations, including virtually all flu shots.

The Centers for Disease Control published a study last fall repudiating any possible link between thimerosal and developmental problems like autism in children. However, First Coast News has obtained non-published documents that show the CDC DID have data supporting such a link-- but kept it from the public.

Documents released through the Freedom of Information Act, detail the transcript of a meeting held in June of 2000 between members of the CDC, the FDA, and representatives from the vaccine industry.

The group discusses the results of a February 2000 study that finds a significant association between exposure to thimerosal-containing vaccines, and developmental issues like autism in children.

Some of the comments--

"There are just a host of neurodevelopmental data that would suggest we've got a serious problem."

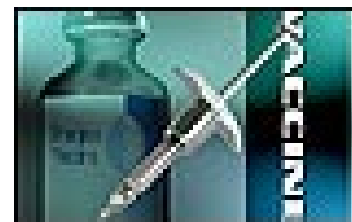
"My gut feeling? It worries me. I don't want my grandson to get a thimerosal-containing vaccine until we know better what's going on."

"We are in a bad position from the standpoint of defending any lawsuits."

Finally--

"We have asked you to keep this information confidential."

And that's what happened. Three years later, the CDC published a study in the November 2003 issue of "Pediatrics"



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contradicting the earlier results, and clearing thimerosal of any link to neurological problems in children.

"I just feel pretty strongly they haven't been honest in analyzing the problem."

So says Florida Congressman David Weldon, a physician. Weldon sent a letter to the head of the CDC in October of 2003, charging that data was selectively used in the "Pediatrics" study to make the earlier evidence of a mercury-autism connection disappear. He also asked for another review of the data. The CDC has not yet officially responded to Weldon's request.

"Where there's smoke there's fire.. and when you see people reluctant to investigate things properly, it makes you think they really don't want to investigate things properly," he says.

Meantime, parents like Bruce Anderson say, while they are not anti-vaccine, they do want doctors to screen children more carefully before administering shots, taking into account the specialized health concerns of each individual child. Anderson also says it's imperative the government recall any vaccines still containing thimerosal.

"I have to live with the memory of my child's cries as I held him down while he was being vaccinated, never knowing that I was injuring him."

Bradstreet adds, "This is a very potent neurotoxin. Let's do everything we can to reduce exposure, not justify why it's OK to give just a little."

Bradstreet, along with Congressman Weldon and other experts on the issue, reiterated their statements on thimerosal in Washington on February 9th. The occasion was an Institute of Medicine panel hearing information both supporting and rejecting the theory that thimerosal is linked to rising autism rates in children.

A spokesman for the CDC tells First Coast News that the agency plans to undertake an objective review of the data presented at the IOM panel.

Weldon has already expressed strong skepticism with the CDC's position however, telling First Coast News, "I don't believe the CDC can really take an objective position on the issue. They are concerned the fears about thimerosal might lead to parents being afraid to vaccinate their children. But the problem isn't vaccines, it's the thimerosal in vaccines. So parents who are concerned about this need to talk with their pediatrician, and carefully check the product insert in each vaccination to make sure the shot is thimerosal-free."

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