

Autism and vaccines: is there a connection?

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What is autism? Autism is a generalized term for various multifaceted brain development disorders characterized by difficulties in social interactions, verbal/nonverbal communications, and repetitive behaviors (. N. p.. Web. 11 Apr 2013.

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autismspeaks.org/what-autism>.). It's a terrifying unknown for parents nationwide. Approximately 1 in every 88 American children is afflicted with the disorder. And as this number continuously rises, coupled with the hefty financial tolls the disorder takes on the family (an estimated \$60, 000 a year), parents are in frantic search of a possible cause (. N. p.. Web. 11 Apr 2013.

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.). They have, in their desperation, come to lay blame on thimerosal. Thimerosal, a vaccine preservative containing mercury, has been proven to cause no harm to recipients, aside from a few minor reactions at the vaccine's injection site.

It has been proven that there is absolutely no connection between thimerosal and autism. In fact the type of mercury found in thimerosal (ethyl mercury) is considerably less toxic than the mercury found in fish (methyl mercury). But this knowledge is of little consequence to the parents of autistic children. They have been persistent in their antithimerosal campaigns, gaining the support of Joseph I. Lieberman, Dan Burton, Dave Weldon, and various other political figureheads.

Some parents have such a strong, deep seeded belief of negative correlations between autism and mercury that they have gone to the <https://assignbuster.com/autism-and-vaccines-is-there-a-connection/>

extremes of denying vaccines for their children. This, in turn, is exposing their children to various illnesses, such as measles and polio. Other parents have taken their children to doctors who claim to have false cures. These cures consist of exposing children to extreme heat, the consumption of numerous supplements, and the withdrawal of copious amounts of blood. In some cases children have even been known to pass out (Harris, Gardiner, and Anahad O'Connor. *On Autism's Cause, It's Parents vs.*

Research. The New York Times, Print.). These “practices” and “cures” do nothing but cause unneeded stress on both parents and children, only adding to the fallacy behind the antithimerosal movement. Autism is a terrifying reality.

But drawing false connections to thimerosal is hindering the progress of finding a possible cure and/or cause. Parents need to let go of their previous misconceptions and in turn direct their attention to equipping the public on basic information needed in dealing with the disorder.