

Evidence of Harm

By ACSH Staff — May 15, 2005

To the Editor:

As the assistant director of public health for the American Council on Science and Health, I would like to reply to your review of David Kirby's *Evidence of Harm: Mercury in Vaccines and the Autism Epidemic* (April 17). I disagree with your reviewer about the timeliness of the book. As noted in a 2004 Institute of Medicine report, the large majority of reputable doctors and scientists agree that available data do not support the existence of a causal relationship between thimerosal, a mercury-based vaccine preservative, and autism.

This finding was supported by all the renowned geneticists, epidemiologists, pediatricians, toxicologists, neuroscientists, psychologists and statisticians -- including a representative from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention -- who gathered recently at a Vanderbilt University event intended to educate journalists on the issue. Little time was spent examining the vaccine-autism link, other than one lecture on the paucity of evidence to support it. Additionally, nine of ten learned parents of autistic children from around the country who attended gave short shrift to the thimerosal theory and viewed the recent media hype as a hindrance to determining real causes, treatments, and intervention techniques.

Kirby's page-turner reads like a Clancy novel but is not a medical text.

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