

## New research links measles, autistic gut disorder

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In a statement published in the same issue of *Molecular Pathology*, A. Morris and D. Aldulaimi say that "it would be entirely wrong to jump to the conclusion that the measles component of MMR 'causes' the colitis or the developmental disorder in these particular (or any other) children." They suggest that children's pre-existing developmental disorders or bowel problems may make them unable to clear the measles virus from their systems, and note that neurological problems often are accompanied by gut abnormalities. [Editor's note: This explanation fails to explain why a large number of children with autism and gut disorders show no evidence of either disorder until they receive the MMR vaccine.]

While many physicians continue to be skeptical about an MMR-autism link, physician Dave Weldon, who is also a United States Representative, says the new findings are reason for pediatricians to warn parents about the possible dangers of the MMR vaccine. "I am very disturbed by these findings," he says, adding, "While the verdict is still out on whether the MMR vaccine causes regressive autism, an association has been demonstrated in this study and others. I call upon the American Academy of Pediatrics to give parents all the facts about this safety concern and allow parents to make an informed decision about whether or not they want to separate the MMR vaccine for their children."

Similarly, Australian physician Philip Stowell, responding to Morris's and Aldulaimi's conclusion that the new study

"proves nothing," commented, "The response I have read proves one thing. The status quo is being defended 'at all odds' while kids continue to be adversely affected by something which no one is prepared to look into seriously. Most of the response to Wakefield's work and his potentially alarming findings has been a rather shameful reactive and data-fudging repetitive reassertion of 'It is all okay' when it clearly is not."

"Potential viral pathogenic mechanism for new variant inflammatory bowel disease," V. Uhlmann, C. M. Martin, O. Sheils, L. Pilkington, I. Silva, A. Killalea, S. B. Murch, A. J. Wakefield, and J. J. O'Leary, *Molecular Pathology*, 2002, 55, prepublication copy. Address: J. J. O'Leary, Department of Pathology, Coombe Women's Hospital, Dublin 8, Ireland.

—and—

"New evidence for a viral pathogenic mechanism for new variant inflammatory bowel disease and development disorder?" A. Morris and D. Aldulaimi, *Molecular Pathology*, 2002, 55, prepublication copy. Address: A. Morris, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Warwick, Coventry, CV4 7AI, U.K.

—and—

"New research on autism and measles 'proves nothing,'" Lynn Eaton, *British Medical Journal*, Vol. 324, February 9, 2002, p. 315.

—and—

"What it does prove," Philip Stowell, *British Medical Journal* (online), February 10, 2002. Address: pbdoc@uq.net.au.

—and—

"Why I owe it to parents to question triple vaccine: Andrew Wakefield explains why he first warned of a possible link between the MMR jab and autism," *Sunday Herald* (U.K.), February 10, 2002.

## Taylor study: no evidence of autism/MMR link seen

While the new research of Andrew Wakefield and colleagues (see page 1) offers more evidence linking autism to the MMR vaccine, another new British study attempts to cast doubt on the association.

Brent Taylor et al. identified 473 autistic children born in London between 1979 and 1998. Using clinical records, they traced the children's immunization histories and determined which children had experienced bowel abnormalities or had histories of normal development followed by regression.

The researchers say they found no change in the proportion of autistic children with bowel problems or developmental regression between 1979 and 1998. If an association between the MMR vaccine and a subtype of autism involving bowel abnormalities and regression existed, they say, the number of cases should have increased after the MMR vaccine was introduced in 1988. Taylor commented to the BBC, "I hope that this is the end of the argument."

Editor's note: This is one of several at-

*tempts by Brent Taylor and his associates to discredit the findings of Andrew Wakefield and an increasing number of other researchers who are discovering evidence linking the childhood vaccines—especially MMR, and the many vaccines which contain mercury—to the increase in autism and related problems. I have particularly little regard for the findings reported by Brent Taylor, since he violates scientific protocol by refusing to make available the data on which his conclusions are said to be based. Taylor not only turned down my request—twice—that he share his data with ARI, he also refused a similar request from Rep. Dan Burton, who asked that government scientists be provided copies. Very strange! What is he hiding?*

"Measles, mumps, and rubella vaccination and bowel problems or developmental regression in children with autism: population study," Brent Taylor, Elizabeth Miller, Raghu Lingam, Nick Andrews, Andrea Simmons, and Julia Stowe, *British Medical Journal* (online), <http://www.bmj.com>. Address: Brent Taylor, b.taylor@rfc.ucl.ac.uk.

## Singh study points to MMR role in autistic autoimmune attack

More evidence linking measles vaccination to autism comes from a new study by Vijendra Singh and Courtney Nelson.

The researchers previously detected elevated levels of measles virus antibodies in autistic individuals. They also found evidence in autistic subjects of autoantibodies to brain myelin basic protein (MBP), an indication of an autoimmune attack on the insulating myelin lining of neurons. In the new study, Singh and Nelson checked for the presence of other viruses including mumps, rubella, cytomegalovirus, human herpesvirus-6, measles-mumps-rubella (MMR), diphtheria-pertussis-tetanus (DPT), and hepatitis B, analyzing the results to see if they correlated with autoantibodies to MBP. The study involved 125 autistic children and 92 non-disabled controls.

"We found that autistic children have significantly higher than normal levels of measles virus and MMR antibodies," the researchers

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## Unsafe for cows, but safe for humans?

Scottish immunization expert John March warns that there is a "potential for problems" when measles vaccine is combined with other vaccines, as it is in the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) shot. His evidence: a similar combined immunization for cattle, combining a "cattle measles" vaccine and pneumonia vaccine, had to be removed from the market years ago because the measles component compromised the immune systems of immunized animals.

Researchers were able to identify the immune system problems stemming from the cattle vaccines, March says, because they took individual blood samples regularly for several years. In human studies, blood samples are taken only once, and are usually pooled so that only group results are available.

"Perhaps only one in 200 children may not be able to handle three live viruses and these are the ones who become autistic," he says. "It is more likely to happen with three simultaneous live infections. We simply do not know as we have never done these studies."

"MMR-type vaccine for cattle withdrawn after test fears 15 years ago," Sarah-Kate Templeton, *Sunday Herald* (UK), February 3, 2002.