



Monday, June 11, 2007

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Autistic children in court

Thousands of families with children with autism from vaccination is bringing their case to federal court beginning in June in what can be a precedent-setting case regarding mandatory vaccinations in infants and school children.

The case, Cedillo vs. the Department of Health and Human Services, is leading the way to establish a link between autism and vaccines for nearly 5,000 similar claims.

Twelve-year-old Michelle Cedillo of Yuma, Ariz. was brought into the courtroom on the first day of hearings June 11. Her parents, Theresa and Michael Cedillo, alleged the preservative thimerosal used in vaccines had weakened Michelle's immune system and prevented her body from

clearing the measles virus when she was immunized at 15 months. Today, Michelle suffers from a variety of health problems including severe autism, inflammatory bowel disease, glaucoma and epilepsy.

Michelle's tragic story is not unlike the thousands of other families making claims that vaccines permanently injured their children.

The burden of proof is easier than in traditional court, which would require "definitive evidence" to prove that vaccines cause autism. In claims court, the plaintiffs only need to prove a link between autism and shots is more likely than not, based on a preponderance of evidence.

Thimerosal is the common name

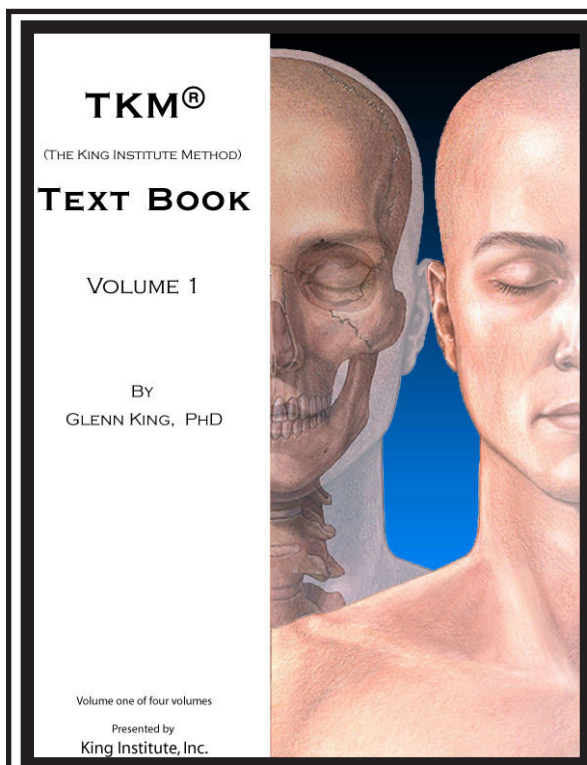
for thiomersal ($C_9H_9HgNaO_2S$) is an organomercury compound approximately 50 percent mercury by weight.

It's most popularly used as a preservative for its antiseptic and anti fungal properties to lengthen the shelf life of routine and non-routine vaccines, immune globulin preparations, skin test antigens, antivenins, ophthalmic and nasal products, and tattoo inks.

Thimerosal was developed under the tradename Merthiolate in 1929 by Dr. Morris S. Kharasch, a chemist at pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly and Company.

It was first put into vaccines in 1931 as a bactericide so that multi-dose vials could be used instead of single-dose vials, which were more expensive to manufacture.

More than 4,800 families have filed claims with the government since 1999



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alleging their children developed autism after receiving routine vaccinations containing thimerosal.

In the same year, the American Academy of Pediatrics requested the removal of the mercury-containing preservative from all childhood vaccines.

In 2002, the US Centers for Disease Control and the Food and Drug Administration stated that thimerosal was to stop being used in some pediatric vaccines called for manufacturers to make more single-dose vials without adding thimerosal.

However, the CDC nor the FDA recalled any unused stocks containing thimerosal. And traces of thimerosal may still end up in single-dose vials from contamination in labs, much like how traces of wheat and milk can find ways into gluten and dairy-free foods manufactured using the same machines.

In 2004, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) rejected the theory that thimerosal caused neurodevelopmental disorders based on epidemiological studies conducted since 2001, the "definitive evidence" required in traditional court.

In 2006, a review by the World Health Organization (WHO), which has used and still currently uses thimerosal-containing vaccines on children in third world

countries, also claimed the vaccines have no adverse neurological affects on patients.

But still the national statistics are staggering considering the increasing rate of autism seems to coincide with the advent of more mandatory vaccines in children.

In the 1990s, children were receiving some 10 different vaccinations before they were six months old.

The 90s also saw a 172 percent increase in autistic children according to the U.S. Department of Education's "Twenty-First Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act" (1999). The country's population increased 13 percent in that time.

Autism is the fastest growing developmental disease at 10 to 17 percent annually.

A 2001 British study from the London School of Economics estimated the annual cost of the disorder at \$90 billion, and 90 percent of the costs go to adult care, and the Autism Society of America estimates that cost will rise somewhere between \$200 to \$400 billion in ten years.

You can visit the U.S. Court of Federal Claims's web site at <http://www.uscfc.uscourts.gov/> and hear audio clips and read transcripts from the hearings. Hearings are set through to the end of June. 🗨️

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