



Updates

Volume 7, Issue 6

**June
2004**

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Does MMR Vaccine Cause Autism?

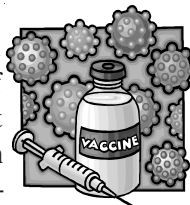
by Judy Ledman, MD

For several years, there have been publicized concerns about the association between the measles vaccine and the onset of autism. In 1998, a report was published describing 12 patients with inflammatory bowel conditions and autism. The author thought there was evidence for measles virus in the gut in some of the patients and HYPOTHESIZED that MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine might cause bowel disease. The absorption of toxic proteins through the damaged gut could cause maldevelopment of the brain leading to autism¹. This idea held considerable news value, and was disseminated on CNN in 1999 and on "60 Minutes" in 2001. The news article failed to report the limitations of the study including the following facts; 4 of the 12 children had autism prior to the gastrointestinal symptoms, there was no control group, and other studies using more sensitive techniques had failed to show the measles virus in the bowel.

Since that time, there has been no confirmation that measles vaccine is associated with inflammatory bowel disease and no evidence that measles vaccine can cause autism. Evidence for the lack of an association between measles immunization and autism has accumulated steadily. For example, studies have found no measles virus in biopsies in chronic bowel disease (1998); no increase in inflammatory bowel disease following MMR vaccine (2001); no relationship between MMR vaccine and the incidence of autism in California between 1980-1994 (2001); and no change in the proportion of autistic children with regression or bowel problems after MMR vaccination in the UK (2002). A compelling report from Denmark found no increase in autism in over 500,000 immunized children². Representatives from groups including the American Academy of Pediatrics and the World

Health Organization have examined the evidence and endorsed the continued use of the vaccine. Recently, 10 of the 13 authors of the original 1998 report formally retracted their interpretation that MMR could cause autism, and the main author has been charged with withholding the fact that he was a paid consultant to a law firm pushing lawsuits against vaccine manufacturers.

Despite the evidence, the original assertions have had damaging consequences. Fearful parents have decided not to have their children immunized, and immunization rates have dropped more than 90%, to 60-80% in some areas. Since vaccine preventable diseases are rarely seen, parents can be lulled into the mistaken belief that they are no longer a threat. Since the drop in immunization rates, measles outbreaks have occurred and children have died as a result. It is very important to find ways to counter immunization myths and provide parents with sources of reliable information.



These websites are recommended to clear up misconceptions about vaccine risks:

- The Vaccine Page, www.vaccines.com
- Institute for Vaccine Safety, www.vaccinesafety.edu
- National Immunization Program, www.cdc.gov/nip/vacsafe
- American Academy of Pediatrics, www.aap.org

¹ Wakefield, A.J., et al. (1998). Ileal-lymphoid-nodular hyperplasia, non-specific colitis, and pervasive developmental disorder in children. *Lancet* 351, 637-641.

² Madsen, K.M., et al. (2002). A population-based study of MMR vaccination and autism. *New England Journal of Medicine* 347, 1477-1482.

ASA's Review on Vaccines and Autism

May 2004

A national panel from the Institute of Medicine (IOM) charged with advising the Government on the safety of vaccines released their final report concluding that there is no causal link between vaccines and autism. The Autism Society of America (ASA) has reviewed the report and does not support the conclusions drawn and is calling for more credible research into the issue.

The IOM report, "Immunization Safety Review: Vaccines and Autism," is based on a meeting conducted in February 2004 in Washington, DC, during which more than a dozen researchers presented evidence related to a proposed link between certain childhood vaccines specifically, those with the mercury-based preservative thimerosal and autism.

ASA has difficulty supporting the conclusions reached by the committee because research on the affected group needed to draw such a conclusion has not been conducted. ASA is calling on the Government to launch biological and clinical studies that look at the subgroup of individuals with autism who may be genetically susceptible to the effects of vaccines and/or thimerosal before putting the issue to rest.

Moreover, the ASA agrees and supports the IOM's own recommendation made in 2001 that biological and clinical studies be conducted to answer the question of a link. ASA also supports many of the points raised by Congressman Dave Weldon (FL), as well as others who believe the IOM report is incomplete and premature.

"Right now, we have two hypotheses in juxtaposition to one another. No matter which one is proved or disproved, until we study the actual population allegedly affected, we will not have a resolution to this personal and human tragedy," ASA President Rob Beck said.

Adapted from: <http://www.autism-society.org>



The Children's Corner of the Virtual Library

Part 1

by Nancy Brandon

The following lists are condensed from "The Children's Corner of the Virtual Library" by Judith Maginnis Kuster. She has provided a list of websites featuring online books for children. The material covers a wide range of reading abilities, from pre-readers to adults. Some books are available as audio files, so children can listen to stories with older brothers and sisters, or adults. There are even websites with books in other languages!



Animated Books

- ➔ [Internet Public Library \(http://ipl.si.umich.edu/div/kidspace/storyhour\)](http://ipl.si.umich.edu/div/kidspace/storyhour) has nine children's stories, including an online and a downloadable animated version of [The Fisherman and His Wife \(http://ipl.si.umich.edu/div/kidspace/storyhour/fisherman/\)](http://ipl.si.umich.edu/div/kidspace/storyhour/fisherman/)
- ➔ [Billy Bears Story Books \(www.billybear4kids.com/story/books.htm\)](http://www.billybear4kids.com/story/books.htm) contains animated downloadable storybooks. There are also cross-platform online options, including [Tiny Titles: Write a Little Book \(www.billybear4kids.com/TinyTitles/TinyBooks.html\)](http://www.billybear4kids.com/TinyTitles/TinyBooks.html).
- ➔ [Children's Storybooks Online \(www.magickeys.com/books/index.html\)](http://www.magickeys.com/books/index.html) is filled with illustrated children's stories including [award winning storybooks online \(www.magickeys.com/books/links.html\)](http://www.magickeys.com/books/links.html). Some of the stories are animated and include coloring books to print out.

Stories That Are Read

- ➔ [Kids' Corner \(http://wiredforbooks.org/kids.htm\)](http://wiredforbooks.org/kids.htm) provides access to several of [Beatrix Potter's classics](#) including "Squirrel Nutkin," and "Peter Rabbit," and other familiar stories in Real Audio, including "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" by Lewis Carroll, "The Frog Prince," and "Tom Thumb" by The Brothers Grimm; Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol," and "Just So Stories" by Rudyard Kipling.
- ➔ [Book Pop Virtual Literature \(www.bookpop.com/bookpop.html\)](http://www.bookpop.com/bookpop.html) has coloring books and music, but the real treasures here are books and stories written and narrated by children's author, Stephen Cosgrove. Four are currently illustrated.



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- ➔ [Children's Books Online](http://www.kennedy-center.org/multimedia/storytimeonline/) (www.kennedy-center.org/multimedia/storytimeonline/) from The Kennedy Center and RealNetworks, includes the author reading "Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day"
- ➔ [Storyville](http://www.alfy.com/Storyville) (www.alfy.com/Storyville) has several animated, interactive storybooks.
- ➔ [Li'l Fingers](http://www.lil-fingers.com/storybooks/index.html) story books is for young children (www.lil-fingers.com/storybooks/index.html)

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Announcement

Updates will be published bi-monthly after our June 2004 issue. The new schedule will be; August, October, December, 2004 and February, April, and June, 2005. We plan to supplement Updates with another mailing that will be either informational, inspirational or both!



Rural Early Access to Children's Health (REACH)

Revision to Telehealth Training Calendar

by Sandy Heimerl

The REACH project staff developed a training schedule based on the input from our first year partners. Dates for the training will **change** from Thursday to Friday starting in August due to scheduling issues for University Branch Campuses. The cost of the training and technology is covered by the grant. Parents are welcome.

REACH Training Calendar

TIMES: Next Training: July 15th from 11:30 – 1:00
Then, beginning in **August**, trainings will be the 3rd Friday of each month from 11:30 – 1:00

We plan to offer CEU's and Developmental Specialist hours towards recertification

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>PRESENTER</u>
July 15, 2004	Augmentative Communication	Nancy Brandon, speech-language therapist ECEP
Aug. 20, 2004	Challenging Behaviors	Brian Lopez, psychologist SWAN & ECEP
Sept 17, 2004	Autism and Intervention	Fletcher Scott, speech-language therapist Project SET
Oct. 15, 2004	Nutrition and Feeding Issues	Elisabeth Ceysens, registered dietitian SAFE (tentative)
Nov. 19, 2004	Writing IFSP Outcomes in Context of Natural Environments	Debra Billings & Mary Zarembo ECNET

To Register for the whole series or for individual topics:

E-mail or call Anna Salazar at REACH **two weeks** prior to the date so that we can provide you with handouts for the training. For participation in the Metro Region, you are welcome to come to the training at the Center for Telehealth on campus. (call to register for Metro, too) at (505) 272-3844, email: amsalazar@salud.unm.edu

UNM's Center for Development and Disability would like to see teleconferencing become one tool that can be used to support families and providers in their rural communities, providing access that people might not be able to have without great expense in both time and money. For more information, please call Sandy Heimerl at (505) 272-0096 or Deborah Hall (505) 272-3782.

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CDD Resource Center (LINC)

1-800-827-6380 or 272-0281

Visit our Website at <http://cdd.unm.edu/ec>

Early Childhood Programs are funded in part by the New Mexico Department of Health



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