

Scandals - 3/15/02

The Thimerosal/SV40 Connection - Public Health's Ongoing Scandal

In spite of the [known toxicity](#) of thimerosal/mercury, vaccines containing it have not been [recalled](#). Rather than being required to remove all existing stocks of mercury-containing vaccines, [manufacturers and the FDA](#) were merely "urged to work toward rapid reduction or elimination of mercury-containing preservatives in vaccines". Had the public not become aware of the fact that vaccines contain mercury, even this woefully inadequate step might not have been taken.

As if that wasn't enough, and ignoring the fact that "absence of evidence is not evidence of absence", it was apparently felt necessary to dilute further the already grudging support being given to the notion that mercury exposure should be reduced, because they went on to say: "When vaccines containing thimerosal have been administered in the recommended doses, hypersensitivity has been noted, but no other harmful effects have been reported". This in spite of the fact that the [FDA](#) "determined that infants who receive thimerosal-containing vaccines at several visits may be exposed to more mercury than recommended by federal guidelines for total mercury exposure", and its known toxicity.

In any event, almost three years later, vaccines containing thimerosal are still available and being administered to infants. (Click [here](#) for more on mercury and vaccines.)

In an ironic, disgraceful twist, the flu vaccine, which also contains [thimerosal](#), and was not included in the list of vaccines recommended to have it removed, is now being [recommended](#) for infants.

What might be the consequences of the zealous pursuit of vaccination, regardless of potential risks? One only has to look to the emerging polio vaccine story for a clue.

When, in pursuit of the elimination of polio via vaccination, it was discovered that a known animal carcinogen contaminated the vaccine, those vaccines containing the contamination [were not recalled](#), for fear of "eroding confidence" in vaccines. Officially adopting what perhaps should be known as its ongoing "ostrich policy", in its apparent belief that what you don't know can't hurt you, Public Health allowed existing stocks to be used up and the public to be kept uninformed.

Sadly, however, that was not to be the end of the story. Over the years there have been many [journal articles](#) on possible connections between SV40 and cancer, the most recent one linking SV40 to [non-Hodgkin's lymphoma](#). For many years, however, little research was being done, and what was being done, ignored. That is, until the report about 30 years later, of SV40 in [children's brain](#)

[tumors](#), and the later accidental discovery that SV40-caused [mesotheliomas](#) in hamsters. (Apparently research showing SV40's presence in "human" brain tumors, as early as [1978](#), was not considered of great enough import to warrant increased investigation.) Now, although the question is being more aggressively studied, with more and more cancers being linked to SV40, there continues to be resistance from some quarters. (To read more, click [here](#) for the three excellent *San Francisco Chronicle* articles on this topic.)

Why were the questions about SV40 and cancer not vigorously pursued, from the very moment of its discovery in polio vaccines administered to millions of people?

What should this say about our blind faith in vaccination policy and the "experts" promoting it?

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Look for the next *Scandals* on Friday, March 22, 2002.

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