

Peter J. Muran, MD

**MERCURY TOXICITY:
 ALZHEIMER'S FOR SENIORS
 AND AUTISM FOR BABIES**

by Peter J. Muran, MD

Despite the neurotoxicity, mercury has been used in the past, in various forms, for its perceived medicinal qualities in the treatment of skin diseases and syphilis. Though mercury does exist in nature as the familiar liquid metal, its highly toxic organic form, methylmercury is of greater concern. Sources of exposure to mercury include dental amalgam, paint, fungicides, seafood, and industrial air pollution. The metal is absorbed through the inhalation of vapors, via the gastrointestinal tract or through contact with the skin.

Notable for its connection with "Mad Hatters", mercury exposure is associated with depression, emotional instability, irritability, memory impairment, learning disabilities and behavioral disorders. These neurological impairments are so well exemplified by the rising rate of autism currently seen in the United States.

The discovery and rise in prevalence of Autism mirrors the introduction and spread of thimerosal (TMS). TMS, a preservative added to many vaccines, has become a major source of mercury in children. Autism was first described in 1943 among children born in the 1930's. TMS was first introduced into vaccines

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BITTER PILLS to SWALLOW

Facts About the Dangers of Tylenol, Advil, Motrin, and Similar Medications

By Daniel C. Fry, D.C.

Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are the most frequently prescribed medications worldwide, and this does not take into account the over-the-counter (OTC) market. Naprosyn, feldene, voltaren, and anaprox are a few of the most popular prescription NSAIDs. Acetaminophen (Tylenol), Ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil, Nuprin), ketoprofen (Orudis), and naproxen (Aleve) are the over-the-counter NSAIDs which are the most popular. These medications represent a huge percentage of the OTC market. The combined sales of Tylenol and Advil alone are over \$1 Billion a year. The makers of Tylenol have sold over 240 billion tablets over the last three decades, the makers of Advil over 48 billion in 15 years. All together there are more than 200 products containing acetaminophen available in the United States.

Why are these figures so important? NSAIDs happen to be one of the most common drug groups associated with serious side effects on the market. These side effects are well established and predictable, however their potential and actual harmfulness are widely underplayed. Because of this, and due to the high demand and dissatisfaction with the present selection available, the search

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We're on TV ...
The Longevity Healthcare Hour
 Thursday, June 12, 11:30AM
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Dr. Muran's guest:
 Daniel C. Fry, D.C.

This Month's Topic:
 Advantages of Chiropractic
 Care

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in the 1930's. In studies conducted prior to 1970, autism prevalence was estimated at 1 in 2000; studies from 1970 to 1990 it averaged 1 in 1000. This was a period of increased vaccination rates of the TMS containing DPT vaccines among children in the developing world. In the early 1990's, the prevalence of autism was found to be 1 in 500, and in 2000 the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found 1 in 150 children affected in one community, which was consistent with reports from other areas of the country. In the late 1980's and early 1990's, two new TMS vaccines, the HIB and Hepatitis B, were added to the recommend schedule containing DPT vaccine among children in the developed world.

The neurotoxicity of mercury has long been recognized. More recently, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) have determined that the typical amount of mercury injected into infants and toddlers via childhood immunizations has exceed government safety guidelines on an individual and cumulative vaccine basis. It is this ever-increasing accumulation of mercury that we assimilate from vaccinations, our foods (including fish) and dental amalgams where the danger lies.

Unlike most substances that we come in contact with mercury is readily incorporated into the cells of our body and are not easily excreted. A significant proportion of the assimilated mercury is retained and continually accumulates in the kidneys, neurological tissue (including the brain) and the liver. Upon autopsy, high levels of mercury have been found in cardiac, thyroid and pituitary tissues of dentist.

The overt neurotoxic and kidney toxic effects of high-level mercury exposure are well established, but the more subtle effects of chronic, low-level mercury accumulation appear to be vast and nondescript. Mercury finds its way into the brain, heart, liver, kidneys, bones, vessels and immune system. Chronic mercury toxicity promotes disruption of the cellular metabolism and inhibits anti-oxidative enzymes. Symptoms commonly seen from this toxicity are chronic fatigue; depression; poor memory and cognitive function; emotional instability;

peripheral numbness or tingling; decreased senses of touch, hearing or vision; hypersensitivity and allergies; persistent infections including chronic yeast overgrowth; compromised immune function; cardiovascular disease and Alzheimer's disease.

A recent front page article in the Los Angeles Times, talked extensively about the mercury content in fish and is included in the recent California proposition 65, a state law that requires businesses to post "clear and reasonable" warnings when exposing people to chemicals that cause cancer and reproductive harm. This is the reason for the signs that you will find posted in the super market about mercury toxicity.

As described, mercury is the most toxic non-radioactive element on earth. A silver colored mercury amalgam filling normally contains 52% mercury. On average, amalgam fillings weigh 1 gram and each contain about 1/2 gram of mercury. A 1/2 gram of mercury in a ten-acre lake would warrant issuance of a fish advisory for the lake. The use of mercury amalgams has been banned and is on scheduled phaseout in Germany, Austria, Denmark and Sweden. A proposition passed in California in 1994 that requires a warning in dental offices using mercury using mercury amalgam stating that "The people of California have determined that the use of mercury in dental amalgam cause birth defects and other health problems". The proposition also requires that permission must be obtained from a patient before placing hazardous material in the mouth.

Longevity Healthcare Center uses protocols based on all of the literature and techniques currently in practice throughout the world. It is clear that the detection of mercury toxicity is clear and simple. This can be done from a simple hair analysis. If the hair analysis is undetermined for heavy metals then a provocation urine test is done to measure cellular mercury levels. The detoxification and removal of the mercury requires close attention to maintaining proper nutritional and trace mineral balance with the proper use of the chelating agent. If the wrong chelating agent is used or if the exact mechanism of

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for the ultimate NSAID continues.

The most widely recognized negative side effects of NSAIDs involve gastrointestinal bleeding. This is because NSAIDs inhibit the production of a chemical, which protects the lining of the stomach, allowing natural stomach acids to eat away at the lining to form ulcers. An analysis published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* found that people taking NSAIDs were almost three times as likely to experience serious gastrointestinal problems, and if you are 65 or older you'll have 5 1/2 times the normal risk of gastrointestinal problems.

An interesting side-note associated with the use of NSAIDs concerns arthritis patients who take ant-acids and acid blockers such as Tagamet, Zantac, and Pepcid in an effort to stave off aspirin or NSAID -induced ulcers. It is estimated that 14 million arthritis sufferers take relatively high doses of aspirin or NSAIDs on a daily basis, and that about 15% of those who suffer from arthritis suffer from ulcers. This is compared to about 1-2% of the general population. Doctors at Stanford University concluded in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, that those who take acid-blockers are more than twice as likely to be hospitalized for gastro-intestinal problems. "NSAID users who take these gastrointestinal medications may actually put themselves at greater risk by creating a false sense of security that delays appropriate evaluation and care."

Kidney toxicity is another recognized side effect. The *New England Journal of Medicine* reported that 8-10 percent of the 50,000 annual kidney failures in the U.S. are caused by acetaminophen related toxicity, that's approximately 4,500 cases! This translates into about \$700 million per year in health care costs. With NSAIDs the risk of kidney damage increases relative to your dosage. An average of one pill per day, or more than 1,000 per lifetime doubles your risk. A person taking a cumulative

dose of 5,000 or more pills containing NSAIDs in a lifetime will be almost 9 times more likely to suffer from kidney failure. If you think that taking 1,000 to 5,000 Tylenol pills sounds unrealistic remember this, a survey of seniors by the National Council on Aging found they consumed NSAIDs daily for an average of 5 years -this despite product warning labels that caution against more than 10 days of consecutive use. If they took only 1 pill a day, that's over 1800 pills in only 5 years.

Unfortunately, the problems associated with NSAID use are not limited to the GI tract or the kidney. Liver toxicity (hepatotoxicity) has also been identified with the use of acetaminophen. Substantial side effects have been observed in patients who have ingested 4g or less in a 24 hour period. Low doses of acetaminophen at slightly above or even within the therapeutic range have been associated with severe liver toxicity in some with suggested alcohol ingestion or with fasting diets. The makers of Tylenol (McNeil PPC) lost a recent court case in which an individual nearly died from complete liver failure from his use of acetaminophen. The U.S. Court of Appeals found that McNeil PPC, acted with "reckless indifference to the health of its consumers" by not warning consumers of the known potential risk of taking Tylenol if you regularly drank alcohol. Keep this in mind the next time you treat your alcohol-induced headache or hangover with acetaminophen.

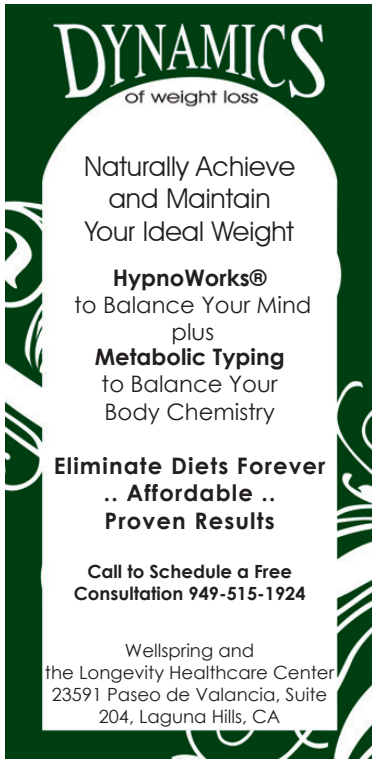
Next Month: Read **Part 2** of *Bitter Pills to Swallow* and new article: *Alternatives to NSAIDs*

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the chelating agent is unknown, it is possible to increase the flow of the mercury from the body across the blood brain barrier and to accidentally increase the concentration of mercury in the brain with deleterious effects. If you would like more information on mercury toxicity determination and detoxification please contact Longevity Healthcare Center.

Peter J. Muran, MD, the Medical Director of Longevity Healthcare Center in Laguna Hills.



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We're on TV

Dr. Muran's Guest, Dr. Daniel C. Fry, will discuss the Advantages of Chiropractic Care. Dr. Fry has recently relocated his practice next to Leisure World and is a refreshing addition to our health community. Dr. Fry shares the same philosophy as Dr. Muran in patient care by not simply treating symptoms but seeks optimal health for his patients. Join us for a lively discussion on Tuesday, June 12 at 11:30am on KSBY, TV 6.