THE POLIO VACCINE AND SIMIAN VIRUS 40

After Thirty Years, Prominent Polio Vaccine Researcher
Confirms Suspicions About Monkey-Virus Contamination

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Return to the OnLine News Index.

Over the past fifteen or more years, the immune system has been increasingly more challenged. Indefensible disorders such as AIDS and HIV as well as conditions like Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) and Persian Gulf War-Related Illnesses are the new epidemics of the Silicon Age. By comparison, the days of polio and small pox epidemics seem crudely forgiving when we consider that today's viral mutants repeatedly outsmart gains made in vaccine development.

However, it seems the days of polio are still with us - not in the form of acute viral outbreaks of fever and paralysis - but in the "uncharted" data on the long-term effects from the simian (monkey) viral contaminated polio vaccines given to countless children and adults three decades ago. Even more, what other "undetectable" monkey viruses have been transmitted in the vaccine batches of late? These unanswered questions continue to resurface in today's research and still riddle retired scientist Ben Sweet. "No one really knows if there are any dangers, but *no* scientist can definitively say there aren't any, *that* is what's scary," says Sweet.

As a senior research scientist for a major pharmaceutical company from 1959 to 1964, Dr. Sweet was one of those responsible for the research, development and field testing of the killed respiratory virus vaccine.

Contaminated Polio Vaccines

Scientific literature states that some polio vaccines given between 1955 and 1961 may have contained low-levels of live monkey viruses. As many as 26 of the simian contaminants were readily detected but still other viruses, like SV40 slipped past rigorous quality control testing procedures available at that time. The simian viruses were inadvertently introduced into the vaccine pool because the polio virus was grown in monkey (Rhesus, Patas, or Cynomolgus) kidney cells.

In his 1960 paper, "The Vacuolating Virus : SV40" Sweet and co-author M.R. Hilleman write, "This new virus represents the detection for the first time of a hitherto "non-detectable" simian virus of monkey renal cultures and raises the important question of the existence of other such viruses. All three types of Sabin's live polio virus vaccine were contaminated."

Dr. Sweet told **Chronic Illnet** about the alarm that circulated around the discovery of the SV40 virus in 1960, "It was a frightening discovery because, back then, it was not possible to detect the virus with the testing procedures we had. It only showed up in the cells of the African Green monkeys -- the species being used exclusively by our company. We had no idea of what this virus would do thirty years ago."

Sweet says there were two things that the research team had determined: "First, we knew that SV40 had

oncogenic properties (cancer-causing) in hamsters which was bad news. Secondly, we found out that it hybridized with certain DNA viruses - like adeno virus - such that the adeno virus would then have SV40 genes attached to it. We couldn't clean up the adeno virus vaccine seed stocks grown in monkey kidney cells only". The seed stocks apparently were always contaminated but the vaccines were still administered.

Confusion Surrounding the "Killed" Vaccine

Possibly the most unsettling part of his research that he carries with him thirty years later, is knowing that an untold number of people (possibly in the 10's of millions) were exposed with this virus whether they were given the "live" or "killed" polio vaccine.

"Even the people who received a killed polio virus vaccine could have been infected. Those papers we wrote were incorrect at the time, stating that formalin killed vaccines were free of simian SV40 virus. But the new information regarding the killed ones was never published," he added. By then it was too late. These findings came after the mass inoculations with the polio vaccine.

The distinction between "live" and "killed" vaccines is a critical one. The scientific community and the American public was told that "killed" vaccines were undoubtedly safe because formalin was used to destroy any contaminating simian virus. The thirty-nine or so simian viruses prior to SV40, were probably inactivated with formalin, but not SV40. The virus eluded the virus-killing behavior of formalin. This now meant even the "killed" vaccines unintentionally contained small amounts of active virus. "So it's a likely possibility that a some of those individuals injected with supposedly inactivated adeno virus vaccines that had the SV40 contaminant or SV40/adeno hybrid could also be producing antibodies to it."

Due to the molecular "kinetics" of virus inactivation, Sweet and other researchers believe other viruses -- similar to SV40 -- could also have been present in the vaccines if they too could circumvent formalin inactivation.

There were specific laboratory difficulties associated with adeno virus -- now carrying an attached form of SV40. Sweet describes, "When we started growing the vaccines, we just couldn't get rid of the SV40-contaminated virus. We tried to neutralize it, but couldn't. Either adeno or SV40 would come out down the line."

Chronic Illnet: What were you thinking at the time when you realized people were being exposed to SV40 about the long-term effects, considering we're still in the dark?

Sweet: "We really didn't think about it until we found out it was oncogenic and now, with the theoretical links to HIV and cancer, it just blows my mind."

Chronic Illnet: Was there any temptation to just scrap the whole project, make an announcement and move on?"

Sweet: "Sabin and, more specifically, Salk vaccines were already widely in use by then. We were, of course, always worried about possible vaccine contaminants present because we didn't know what these monkey cell cultures were carrying. We were always worried about encountering a new, undescribed virus. Always. When we found out there were viruses present in the Rhesus -cynomolgus monkey systems, and the possibility that each monkey assay system was different from another, the temptation was there to transfer the studies to another system. But it was too late to switch gears and start using raccoon or chicken systems, because then you could be dealing with another whole set of viruses."

Chronic Illnet: What was the political climate?

Sweet: "You had to be careful, very careful. When the virus appeared oncogenic in hamsters, we wanted to do tests to determine if it caused malignant transformation of normal cells in culture. In reality, we did not although an outside agency confirmed the findings."

Sweet also described another inherent problem in vaccine development -- the controversy and competition between the Salk (killed) and Sabin (live) formulas. Despite common knowledge, both Salk and Sabin were definitely contaminated. The Salk vaccine had already garnered prestigious appeal as a "safe vaccine".

Long-term Studies Encouraged Three Decades Ago

In his 1960 paper, Sweet, et al. stressed the need for studies on the long-term effects on humans to determine the pathogenicity of these agents for man. "When the 'contaminated' vaccines were released, we really felt confident patients needed a substantially higher level of infectious SV40 and/or they had to receive multiple shots to elevate the body's viral count high enough to cause the harm." To some, the term "contaminated" carries with it an intent of malice, but Dr. Sweet says this is clearly not the case. Sweet noted that persons fed live SV40 contaminated polio virus vaccine orally, or inactivated Salk-type vaccine intramuscularly, showed strong evidence of antibody production to polio viruses. In additon, the vaccine recipients were not showing significant harmful effects or antibody production, in the short term, to SV40 - which was encouraging. "Less concerning long-terms effects could be noted," he says.

At the time of the discovery of the human exposure to SV40, there was no evidence that the virus was present or active in vaccine recipients. In recent years, however, SV40 has been isolated in human tissue, two from the brains of patients with PML (progressive multifocal leukoencephalopathy) and another from a metastatic melanoma patient. Results of this study appeared in the paper "Human Exposure to SV40 : Review and Comment" by Shah and Nathanson in the Journal of Epidemiology in January of 1976. Important from that report is the only definitive origin of where human exposure came from, "With the exception of viral vaccines, no pharmaceutical product intended for human use requires the use of simian cultures." Based on their interpretations, the authors estimate somewhere between 10-30 million people of the 98 million injected were exposed to at least SV40.

Today's Polio Vaccine Research - Long-Term Effects

To date, the polio vaccine has been administered to an estimated ninety-seven percent of children in the United States.

Although there are no "proven" scientific facts about the possible perils of contaminated or even "purified" polio vaccines, there are a handful of credible researchers with theories too intriguing and carefully outlined to disregard. Their theories, if proven, may offer a new link in conquering the immunodeficiency diseases of this century.

Microbiologist Howard Urnovitz is one member of a team who believes many of today's "new" syndromes like Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Gulf War-Related Illnesses and even HIV have, "some association with the possible contaminants in the vaccine." He says we may be paying the price for "prevention" years later, as the uncertainty about the effects on our immune system from the vaccine continues to unfold.

Was SIV Also Present? Is There an Evolution of HIV from the Vaccines ?

There is also a concern whether another virus of primate origin -- Simian Immunodeficiency Virus (SIV) -- could also have been present in the original vaccines. That possibility cannot be ruled out. But only

testing of the original polio vaccine samples and seed stocks would give a reliable or closely definitive answer. Sweet stressed the need for studies on the original simian isolates and the antisera prepared against them and their possible relationship to SIV. At this point, future studies may be lost due to the impossibility of retrieving such samples.

At the 8th Annual Houston Conference on AIDS, Urnovitz suggests that HIV-1 may have also originated from the contaminated polio vaccines through the recombination with normal human genes. "It is very likely that HIV-1 may have been a result, and that it may in fact be a monkey-human hybrid. His theory states that the contaminating viruses have "archived" themselves in the body's nerve tissue. These virus fragments then resurface at a later date when the immune system becomes challenged. An opportunistic infection or exposure to toxins could be the "trigger" that stimulates the reappearance of these virus fragments.

"This virus 'archiving' could be igniting the symptoms of central nervous system disorders, chronic fatigue and joint pain that have been linked to more than a dozen unexplained epidemics," he added.

Dr. R. Stricker's paper entitled "The Polio Vaccine and the Origin of AIDS" that appeared in the January 1994 edition of *Medical* Hypothesis is yet another theory highlighting a potential link. Stricker states, "The transfer of monkey viruses to man via vaccines is particularly relevant to AIDS since the causative agent HIV, is thought to be derived from a simian precursor virus." He says the evolution of HIV remains to be proven but is nonetheless startling, "Is it only a coincidence that HIV infection manifested itself at the same time as the introduction of vaccines that are now known to have been contaminated with simian viruses?"

The collection of theories on the origins, pathways and the sheer number of potential "victims" from the contaminated vaccines is certainly unsettling. Although each theory has its own individual elements, a cohesion exists: The cross-species cultivation of vaccines is clearly laden with risks -- risks that may be irreversible, carrying consequences too great to endure. But to what extent, if any, irreparable damage has been inflicted upon humanity is still blurry.

For consumer activist Barbara Loe Fisher, co-Founder & president of the National Vaccine Information Web Site, the fact that the original vaccines were contaminated and current polio vaccines are still grown on African Green monkey tissues, is just one more indication that government vaccine officials have created dangerous public health policies without making sure they have the solid science to back them up.

"Who is minding the public health when the FDA allows drug companies to produce vaccines grown on animal tissue cultures and they don't even know if this practice is facilitating cross species transfer of animal viruses into man?" says Fisher.

Highlighting the fact that American parents are legally required to vaccinate their babies with 10 different viral and bacterial vaccines, Fisher warns, "No one really knows the latent, long term effects on the human immune and neurological systems. With 200 vaccines in the research pipeline, more than 100 in clinical trials and scores on the brink of being licensed, vaccine research had better get back to the basic science before another AIDS epidemic is created in a vaccine lab."

For more information on this topic, refer to the highlighted phrases for hyperlinked information and additional sources.

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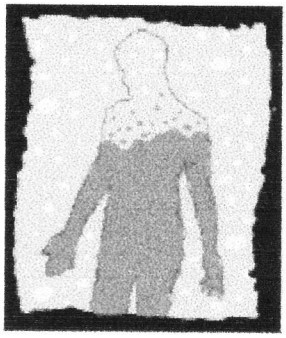

America's Biggest Cover-Up:

50 More Things Everyone Should Know About
The Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Epidemic And Its Link To AIDS

by NEENYAH OSTROM

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