

Simpson, Diane M

From: Simpson, Diane M.
Sent: Tuesday, August 07, 2001 10:33 AM
To: 'christopher.gillberg@pediat.gu.se'
Subject: autism data in Sweden

Dr. Gillberg,

I am the (acting) Deputy Director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Immunization Program. In the United States there are concerns that the thiomersal contained in childhood vaccines could have contributed to a perceived increase in the incidence of autism (and other neurologic disorders). The addition of thiomersal in routine childhood vaccines was stopped in 1999 in the US, but the question of any adverse events is being studied by a special committee of scientists under our Institute of Medicine (IOM).

The US does not have a system to routinely capture data on cases of autism. Consequently, we at NIP do not have good information on the prevalence or incidence of autism in US children and whether it has increased over the past 10 to 20 years. We are seeking other developed countries who have limited use of thiomersal in their vaccines and good data on autism rates over time to see what their experience has been. Sweden is one possibility (we are also talking to researchers in Denmark)

I have reviewed some of the literature on the incidence of autism and know that you are a recognized leader in that field. I also believe that you have conducted surveys for autism over time in a specific area in Sweden. We would be very interested in speaking to you or your colleagues about the data you have.

Because our IOM committee's work is in process and we expect them to issue their report in the next several weeks, we expect increased public concern and questions in the near future. Consequently, if you are willing to talk to us about your work, we would like to meet with you this month. We have tentatively scheduled a trip to Denmark on August 23; we could easily include a visit to your University in that same time period.

Please let me know if you are willing to meet with us and if the time period we suggested is agreeable. (It is possible that Dr. Harald Hejbel may be contacting you also on our behalf) Thank you for your consideration of our request.