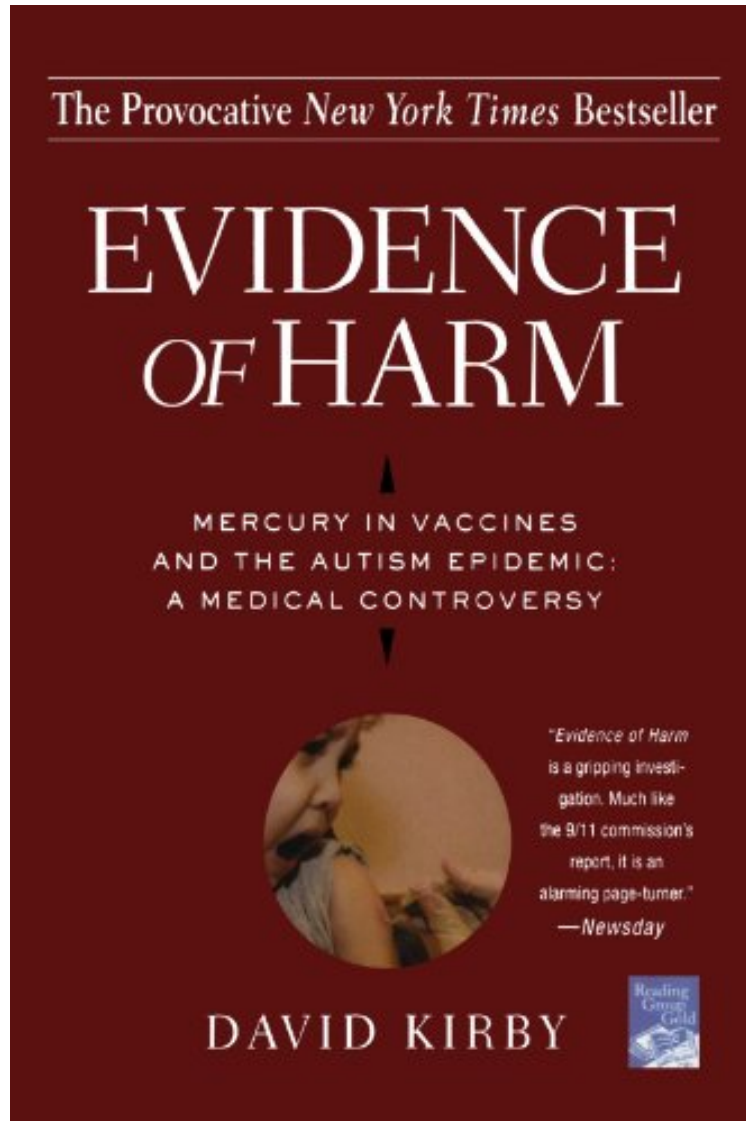


# Evidence of Harm: Mercury in Vaccines and the Autism Epidemic: A Medical Controversy

David Kirby

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**David Kirby : Evidence of Harm: Mercury in Vaccines and the Autism Epidemic: A Medical Controversy** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Evidence of Harm: Mercury in Vaccines and the Autism Epidemic: A Medical Controversy:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Great BookBy Linda BlossomIf you want to know where the idea of

mercury, vaccinations, and autism came from, here is one of the sources. It traces the work of parents who began to unravel the connection themselves and formed the group Safe Minds to deal with this. It shows the duplicity of the NIH and why they are not to be trusted. If you give money to Autism Speaks you are supporting high salaries and fancy Manhattan offices but if you support Safe Minds, Adventures in Autism and other sincere groups, you will be doing real good. Start by reading this book. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By qigirl Thank you 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This book is a must read for those seeking an insight into the struggles involved with fighting for information and to be heard regarding vaccines. The unrelenting struggle of concerned parents to fight against a deaf bureaucracy, our government, inspires hope and shows that the battle is against egos, complacency, and denial.

In the 1990s reported autism cases among American children began spiking, from about 1 in 10,000 in 1987 to a shocking 1 in 166 today. This trend coincided with the addition of several new shots to the nation's already crowded vaccination schedule, grouped together and given soon after birth or in the early months of infancy. Most of these shots contained a little-known preservative called thimerosal, which includes a quantity of the toxin mercury. Evidence of Harm explores the heated controversy over what many parents, physicians, public officials, and educators have called an "epidemic" of afflicted children. Following several families, David Kirby traces their struggle to understand how and why their once-healthy kids rapidly descended into silence or disturbed behavior, often accompanied by severe physical illness. Alarmed by the levels of mercury in the vaccine schedule, these families sought answers from their doctors, from science, from pharmaceutical companies that manufacture vaccines, and finally from the Center for Disease Control and the Food and Drug Administration—to no avail. But as they dug deeper, the families also found powerful allies in Congress and in the small community of physicians and researchers who believe that the rise of autism and other disorders is linked to toxic levels of mercury that accumulate in the systems of some children. An important and troubling book, Evidence of Harm reveals both the public and unsung obstacles faced by desperate families who have been opposed by the combined power of the federal government, health agencies, and pharmaceutical giants. From closed meetings of the FDA, CDC, and drug companies, to the mysterious rider inserted into the 2002 Homeland Security Bill that would bar thimerosal litigation, to open hearings held by Congress, this book shows a medical establishment determined to deny "evidence of harm" that might be connected with thimerosal and mercury in vaccines. In the end, as research is beginning to demonstrate, the questions raised by these families have significant implications for all children, and for those entrusted to oversee our national health.

.com Avoiding hyperbole while writing about a possible medical catastrophe is no easy task, but David Kirby has created a fine balance of investigative and personal detail in Evidence of Harm. Combining stories from the parents of autistic children with reports, speeches and studies from researchers, pediatricians and government officials, he creates a picture that is as terrifying as anything dreamed up by Hitchcock. The topic at hand is determining whether high levels of organic mercury present in an inexpensive preservative used in vaccinations can cause either autism or autism-like symptoms. Kirby's in a delicate position, searching for the truth between frantic parents (he focuses on the founders of political action group Safe Mind) and the self-protective pharmaceutical industry (the author thanks the nameless person who placed a pro-Eli Lilly litigation rider into the Homeland Security Act of 2002). He's also honest enough of a reporter to admit to the temptation of deciding mercury is the culprit behind a range of disorders, even in light of some inconclusive test results. The ultimate truth isn't clear, and Kirby is direct about each of the reasons his sources have for their biased opinions. While some of the straight research reports will likely go over the head of anyone not well versed in the terminology, the book is never dull--there is a continual urgency in the material that resists pedantry. However undecided the experts, readers will likely land firmly in one angry camp or the other. Jill Lightner From Publishers Weekly Starred . The first serious journalistic account of a highly controversial topic, Kirby's book addresses the front-page question: has a mercury-containing preservative called thimerosal, commonly used in children's vaccines, caused a national epidemic of juvenile autism? Following the development of the debate through the eyes of a handful of impassioned parents who formed the political action group, Safe Minds, Kirby, an experienced writer for the New York Times, crafts an engrossing David and Goliath story from this controversy, one in which the giant is an amalgamation of big government bureaucrats and corporate pharmaceutical lobbyists. Whether the association between thimerosal and autism is real remains to be seen, as Kirby points out. The evidence, presented here in excruciating detail but clouded by the parents' editorializing, is inconclusive but suggestive. Readers inclined to believe the parents' case will be convinced that there has been a big conspiracy; readers inclined to be skeptical will likely view the parents as self-serving proselytizers who spin each piece of evidence to suit their forgone conclusions. Walking the middle line, Kirby acknowledges that "each side accuses the other of being irrational, overzealous, blind to evidence they find inconvenient, and subject to professional, financial, or emotional conflicts of interest that cloud their judgment." And though Kirby clearly sympathizes with the parents' tragic experience of autism in their families and their inherent desire for justice, and though he occasionally demonstrates a lack of understanding about the politics of scientific publication and the wording of scientific articles, his book remains one of the most thoroughly researched

accounts of the thimerosal controversy thus far. This is the book for medical professionals and concerned parents to read. It's accessible in its handling of medical topics and compelling in its recounting of the parents' fight to advance their agenda in the face of both political and scientific roadblocks. Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Science Times journalist Kirby addresses the burgeoning number of U.S. children diagnosed with autism, ADHD, and speech delays with as much detachment as possible, given what appears to be overwhelming, though anecdotal, evidence of a connection between those diagnoses and a mercury-based preservative. Long considered a genetic disorder, autism was recently reclassified because its incidence has reached epidemic proportions; from 1 in 5,000 infants in the 1980s to 1 in 166 in two decades. With that increase, more parents began taking matters into their own hands when previously healthy infants suddenly began to radically regress. Conducting their own research and demanding scientific information, these parents eventually sniffed out mercury, "the second most toxic substance on earth" and an additive to vaccines. The more they pressed for explanations, the more vehemently government agencies and pharmaceutical companies, supported by their own data, denied a connection. Some facts Kirby asserts seem hard to refute, however, and the juxtaposition of heartrending parents' stories and disengaged rhetoric of official agency and company documents makes anything but refutation unconscionable. Donna Chavez Copyright copy; American Library Association. All rights reserved