

Simpson, Diane M

From: Simpson, Diane M.
Sent: Friday, June 22, 2001 11:05 AM
To: 'Marta Granstrom'
Subject: RE: vaccine preservatives

Thank you for taking the time to reply. The information is very useful to us here as we work on the thiomersal issue.

-----Original Message-----

From: Marta Granstrom [mailto:marta.granstrom@labmed.ki.se]
Sent: Friday, June 22, 2001 9:37 AM
To: Simpson, Diane M.
Subject: Re: vaccine preservatives

Dear Diane,

Thank you for your letter and please excuse my delay in answering - I have been away travelling abroad for two weeks.

It is correct that Sweden has not used pediatric vaccines containing thiomersal for many years now - officially it was abandoned in 1989 but since the stock remaining was sold out, the Swedish Medical Products Agency claims that we should count pediatric vaccines as thiomersal-free since 1992.

I know that also Denmark has abandoned the use of thiomersal quite some time ago but I don't know when. I would propose that you contact "Michael Stellfeld" <MSF@ssi.dk> at the Danish Serum Institute (SSI) to get a precise date.

I am very well aware of the recent concerns in the US over thiomersal. On the expert committee (Group 15 for Vaccines and Sera) of the European Pharmacopoeia I represent Sweden and had in vain tried to get Europe to ban its use in single dose vials until the US interest in the issue (it is removed also from multidose vials in Sweden but that might have been too much to aim for in a first step). In the latest version of the monography of the EU Ph on "Vaccines for Human Use" it now states that single dose vials should not contain a preservative - without the 10 line exceptions that used to follow the statement. I thanked Neal Halsey in the name of European infants for the help when I met him again last year.

Very best regards,

Marta Granstrom

>Roger Bernier gave me your name and email address and said that you
>would be a good person to contact with the following questions:

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>Has Sweden used thimerosal (or other mercury containing compounds) as a
>preservative in their vaccines? If Sweden no longer uses thimerosal
>(or a similar compound) do you know when the practice was discontinued?

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>If you have similar data regarding vaccines used in Denmark, that would
>also be very helpful.

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>As an introduction: I am the acting Deputy Director for the National
>Immunization Program (Dr. Jose Cordero, the previous deputy director
>has taken a temporary assignment as head of the CDC's new center on
>birth defects and developmental disabilities). As you may be aware the
>use of thimerosal as a preservative in vaccines has been a source of
>recent concern. U.S. manufacturers have discontinued its use as a preservative in
>vaccine products given to young children. I appreciate any information you
>can provide.

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