

# The Pressure Point

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## NC Respiratory Board Hearing Results Positive

*A Milestone for Hyperbaric Clinics Stateside*



July 2007—In an unprecedented hearing regarding the regulation of mild hyperbaric oxygen chambers by the *North Carolina Respiratory Board*, the treatment clinic known as *The Breath of Life Treatment Center* succeeded in making its case that its mild hyperbaric chambers are in a class of their own, and not subject to the *North Carolina*

*Respiratory Care Practice Act*.

The board initially argued that these chambers should be regulated in the same manner as high pressure chambers, which require a full-time Certified Hyperbaric Technician or physician to be present during treatment. The IHA, however, provided testimony and evidence from the manufacturer showing the device to be licensed for home use, sub-acute clinics, and not requiring its operation to be monitored by a technician.

Furthermore, the board sought to regu-  
*(Continued on page 3)*

## National News

## High-stakes trial weighs autism claims

*One family's anguish is front and center in a long-awaited legal fight over whether there's a link between disorder and vaccines.*

By Jia-Rui Chong and Thomas H. Maugh II,  
Times Staff Writers

WASHINGTON — June 25, 2007 — Theresa and Michael Cedillo, the parents of an autistic child, sat behind their three attorneys on one side of the courtroom.

On the other side were three federal lawyers armed with a shelf full of scientific studies and legal briefs. Behind them were more rows of lawyers and scientists, some of them representing the biggest pharmaceutical companies in the world.

It was a lopsided gathering, but the Cedillos had been waiting for the confrontation since they came to believe years ago that their daughter's autism may have been triggered by a combination of childhood vaccines and a mercury preservative used in them.

"For so long no one wanted to hear," said Theresa, 45. "Now someone wants to listen."



Michael and Theresa Cedillo noticed their daughter's autistic behavior when Michelle began pushing her parents away with her arms

The case of Cedillo vs. Secretary of Health and Human Services is the culmination of one of the most wrenching episodes of modern public health.

*(Continued on page 2)*

(continued from page 1) High-stakes trial weighs autism claims

For more than a decade, thousands of families of autistic children have clamored to gain legitimacy for their claim that childhood vaccines are to blame for their children's plight.

Now they are having their day in court. "We're hoping we can ... open the gates for other children who are ill," said Michael Cedillo, 51, a meter reader and bill collector for an electric company in Arizona.

Arguments in the Cedillos' case began June 11. Theirs is the first of nine families that will appear over the next year in an obscure federal court that rules on injuries possibly caused by vaccines. The cases were chosen to represent 4,800 autism claims that have flooded the vaccine court in recent years.

The stakes are high. The court oversees a \$2.5-billion trust fund that could be drained if the parents win their claim.

Public health officials have warned that a finding favorable to the parents could deter other parents from vaccinating their children, a potential health calamity.

The government position is backed by the overwhelming weight of scientific evidence, which has repeatedly found the vaccines safe.

But what the Cedillos and other parents lack in hard data, they have made up for with a stubborn passion and sorrow that science cannot dispute.

"It is parents versus science," said Kevin Conway, one of the attorneys for the Cedillos.

#### Preservative blamed

At the center of the case is Michelle Cedillo. At 12, she still sleeps in diapers. She mostly communicates by waving her hands or tapping on a table. She can count to 2 but no higher.

Her parents say Michelle was a happy, normal 15-month-old until she received the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine, commonly known as MMR, on Dec. 20, 1995.

A week later, she began to have a fever that soared to 105.8 degrees. "She was a whole different child" after the fever broke, her mother said.

Michelle pushed her father away when he tried to nuzzle her. She stopped talking and didn't answer to her name. She



Michelle Cedillo now 12, and mother, Theresa

**"Michelle was a happy, normal 15-month-old until she received the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine, commonly known as MMR, on Dec. 20, 1995."**

became obsessed with watching the same "Sesame Street" videos.

Michelle was soon diagnosed with autism. "We were totally numb," said her mother.

The disorder leaves its victims isolated from the world around them. Autistic children typically are unable to understand others' emotions, have difficulty speaking and are prone to repetitive actions.

Some autistics are able to function almost normally; others are severely impaired.

There are no nationwide data documenting the historical incidence of autism. Twenty years ago, psychiatrists estimated the rate at 1 in every 2,000 to 5,000 children. Last year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that 1 in 150 schoolchildren had been diagnosed with it.

Some parents think autism can be caused by a vaccine preservative called thimerosal, which contains ethyl mercury. Partly on the precautionary urging of the U.S. Public Health Service, the use of thimerosal was abandoned in 2001 in childhood vaccines, except for influenza vaccines.

Mercury can cause neurological problems, and some studies have concluded there is a link with autism.

Parents groups frequently cite a 2006 study by French and British researchers that found indications of elevated mercury and other heavy-metal levels in children with developmental and neurological disorders, including autism.

But at least 14 separate mainstream studies have rejected the connection, showing that the rate of autism is the same in children who received thimerosal and those who did not.

The growth of the disorder also has not abated since thimerosal was removed from vaccines.

The results are "clear and consistent and reproducible," said Dr. Paul Offit of the Philadelphia Children's Hospital.

Many researchers believe that genetics is behind autism. Dr. Peter Hotez, president of the Sabin Vaccine Institute in Washington, noted that when one identical twin has the disorder or other serious social impairment, there is a 90% chance that the second twin will as well.

But, parents ask, how can an epidemic be caused by genes?

Some researchers argue that there is no autism epidemic.

**"Mercury can cause neurological problems, and some studies have concluded there is a link with autism."**

An analysis of data from 44 states, led by researchers at Washington University and the University of Wisconsin, found that the increase in autism was completely offset

by a decrease in the prevalence of children considered cognitively or learning disabled. In other words, they say, children simply have been shuffled from one category to another.

The Cedillos have read reams of studies. Theresa, a stay-at-home mother, spends most of her time



**(cont) High-stakes trial weighs autism claims**



caring for Michelle or scouring the Internet.

She doesn't doubt the science, but she questions whether it has searched deep enough to find the key that explains Michelle.

"I know what they've said, but I believe it happened the way it happened," she said.

**In the courtroom**

Amid a sea of business suits, Michelle sat struggling in her wheelchair in a white dolphin T-shirt on the first day of the trial.

Even though she wore noise-canceling headphones to screen out the courtroom hubbub, she was overwhelmed by the new surroundings. She jerked in her wheelchair, groaned and hit herself in the face until her parents took her out.

The Cedillos mortgaged their home in Yuma, Ariz., to stay in Washington for the three weeks of the trial.

Special Master George L. Hastings Jr., who is presiding over the case with two others, thanked the family for being at the trial.

**“But her case...was deemed one of the strongest.**

**Medical tests have found measles virus in her body that matched the strain in the MMR vaccine”**

Even in the labyrinthine bureaucracy of Washington, vaccine court is an obscure venue.

In the past, civil courts would have handled cases like Michelle's. That situation changed in the 1980s when the vaccine industry faced a rash of

lawsuits over brain damage caused by the childhood diphtheria-pertussis-tetanus vaccine.

After the price of the vaccine rose 2,000% over a two-year period and at least one manufacturer abandoned the business, Congress established the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program in 1988.

Through congressional funding and a 75-cent surcharge on each vaccine dose, it created a fund that now totals \$2.5 billion.

Given the millions of people who receive vaccinations each year, the number of claims is tiny. Since 1990, the court has granted awards totaling \$725.7 million in 857 nonautism cases.

The nine autism test cases are divided into three groups — one blaming autism on the MMR vaccine, one blaming mercury and one blaming both.

In many ways, Michelle seems a strange choice for the first test case, because she is not a typical autistic child. She has also been diagnosed with inflammatory bowel disease, arthritis, osteopenia, uveitis and epilepsy.

But her case, which is based on the combination MMR-mercury claim, was deemed one of the strongest. Medical tests have found measles virus in her body that matched the strain in the MMR vaccine.

Dr. Marcel Kinsbourne, a pediatric neurologist from the New School University in New York, cited previous studies in testifying that it was plausible Michelle's immune system had been damaged by thimerosal in the nine childhood vaccines she had received. The measles virus in her body could then have spread to her brain and triggered autism, Kinsbourne testified.

**(conclusion) NC Respiratory Board**

**“Often the transition takes place in between in-clinic treatment sessions when the patient has finished a batch of treatments and returns home until the next batch of treatments”**

lated the use of oxygen concentrators in conjunction with this apparatus, but could not reach a conclusion and agreed to allow *Breath of Life Treatment Center* to continue operation.

This case represents a significant weight that had been placed on *The Breath of Life Center*. *Breath of Life* helps families in North Carolina, many who treat with the mild chambers.



Above: a mild chamber, a prescription device

The IHA also provided information about the IHA's certification process, which sets guidelines for member-centers interested in transitioning patients from higher pressure chambers to lower pressure home chambers. Often the transition takes place in between in-clinic treatment sessions when the patient has finished a batch of treatments and returns home until the next batch of treatments.

This case is significant because it demonstrates what the state is, or is not, able to regulate with regards to the use of this chamber based on the nature of the apparatus and its intended home use clearance by the FDA.

Unlike high pressure vessels that require a full-time Certified Hyperbaric Technician, a title that carries with it special knowledge of gasses and diving procedures, the mild chambers in question are designed with the lay person in mind, incorporating safety features that eliminate user error and complicated operation procedures.

The “oxygen-concentrator” issue came to a similar conclusion. Oxygen alone is to be regulated, as is already done in all states, but its use with a chamber intended for home use will be left up to the discretion of a Respiratory Care Practitioner or prescribing doctor who follows the patient's progress and hyperbaric oxygen treatment.



## Pesticide link to autism suspected

A state study suggests two farm sprays may raise chances of having a child with the disorder.



By Marla Cone, Times Staff Writer

LA TIMES—July 30, 2007—Women who live near California farm fields sprayed with organochlorine pesticides may be more likely to give birth to children with autism, according to a study by state health officials to be published today.

The rate of autism among the children of 29 women who lived near the fields was extremely high, suggesting that exposure to the insecticides in the womb might have played a role. The study is the first to report a link between pesticides and the neurological disorder, which affects one in every 150 children.

### FOR THE RECORD:

**Autism link: An article in Monday's California section about a new state study that found that exposure to two pesticides may make women more likely to give birth to children with autism said it was the first study to find a link between pesticides and autism. Italian scientists reported in 2005, however, that pesticides known as organophosphates could cause neurological changes that lead to autism. —**

But the state scientists cautioned that their finding is highly preliminary because of the small number

of women and children involved and lack of evidence from other studies.

"We want to emphasize that this is exploratory research," said Dr. Mark Horton, director of the California Department of Public Health. "We have found very preliminary data that there may be an association. We are in no way concluding that there is a causal relationship between pesticide exposure of pregnant women and autism."

The two pesticides implicated are older-generation compounds developed in the 1950s and used to kill mites, primarily on cotton as well as some vegetables and other crops. Their volumes have declined substantially in recent years.

Examining three years of birth records and pesticide data, scientists from the Public Health Department determined that the Central Valley women lived within 500 meters, or 547 yards, of fields sprayed with organochlorine pesticides during their first trimester of pregnancy. Eight of them, or 28%, had children with autism. Their rate of autism was six times greater than for mothers who did not live near the fields, the study said.

Susan Kegley, senior scientist of Pesticide Action Network North America, a San Francisco-based advocacy group, said the report adds to an existing body of evidence that endosulfan and dicofol, already banned in some countries, are harmful.

"This is one of the first papers that links use of pesticide to incidence of a disease, and autism in particular," she said. "The findings are very strong. This is a sixfold risk factor in comparison

to someone who is not exposed. There aren't too many studies that come out like that."

Even though small numbers of children were involved, "it is still one of those things that make you sit up and pay attention," she said.

The findings suggest that 7% of autism cases in the Central Valley during the years studied — 1996 through 1998 — might have been connected to exposure to the insecticides drifting off fields into residential areas. Births during those years were analyzed because children born later might not yet be diagnosed with autism.

Children with autism spectrum disorders have impaired social and communication skills. The causes are unknown, but because diagnoses have been increasing, scientists have been exploring various environmental factors, including children's vaccines and chemical pollutants.

"The good news is we've used a new research technology to generate hypotheses and possible associations, so we are making progress in the battle to get more information" about the cause of autism, Horton said.

Below: Cotton Grub



Pesticide link to autism (continued)

**“The autism rate was highest for children of those mothers who lived the closest to the fields and it declined as the distance from the fields increased”**

The goal of the study was to "systematically explore the general hypothesis that residential proximity to agricultural pesticide applications during pregnancy could be associated with autism spectrum disorders in offspring," the authors wrote in their study, published online today in the scientific journal *Environmental Health Perspectives*.

The scientists collected records of nearly 300,000 children born in the 19 counties of the Sacramento and San Joaquin river valleys. Of those children, 465 had autism. The scientists then compared the addresses during pregnancy to state records that detailed the location of fields sprayed with several hundred pesticides.

For most pesticides, no unusual numbers of autism cases were found, but the exception was a class of compounds called organochlorines. Most, including DDT, were banned in the United States several decades ago because they were building up in the environment. Only dicofol and endosulfan remain.

The autism rate was highest for children of those mothers who lived the closest to the fields and it declined as the distance from the fields increased.

There is no other human or animal evidence that the two chemicals can cause autism. But both affect nerves and the brain — and cause reproductive effects and alter hormones in animal tests. In addition, dicofol is a possible human carcinogen.

The scientists concluded that "the possibility of a connection between gestational exposure to organochlorine pesticides and autism spectrum disorders requires further study."

A July report by the state Department of Pesticide Regulation said endosulfan can spread far from fields via the air and expose the public, based on air monitoring in Fresno, Monterey and Tulare counties. The agency is likely to designate endosulfan as a toxic air contaminant soon, and dicofol could follow. That designation triggers a review by the agency to see whether steps should be taken to minimize the chemicals drifting off

fields into nearby communities.

Glenn Brank, spokesman for the pesticide agency, said officials there are "very interested" in the new autism data but say that "more work" on the potential link is needed before it can carry much weight in assessments of the chemicals' risks.

The two insecticides are now used much less often than in the years in which the possible connection to autism was found.

As a result, there is less likelihood that pregnant women are exposed today. Nearly 774,000 pounds were applied in 1996, compared with 277,000 pounds in 2005, down nearly 64%, according to state records.

"In the past couple years, the bottom has dropped out of these two," Brank said.

Insects have built up resistance and cotton farmers have switched to new compounds.

The two chemicals are not found in household or yard pesticides. Traces are found in food, but the study looked only at possible exposure from the air. The chemicals are used most extensively in Fresno, Kings, Imperial and Tulare counties. Dicofol is mostly used on cotton, oranges, beans and walnuts. Endosulfan is used primarily in tomato processing and on lettuce, alfalfa and cotton crops.

**Common Symptoms of Mild to Severe Toxic Exposure**

*Mild*

- Headache, Dizziness
- Blurred vision, excessive tearing
- Contracted pupils of eye
- Nausea, cramping, diarrhea
- Slowed heartbeat (<50bpm)
- Rippling of muscles under skin
- Excessive sweating/ salivation

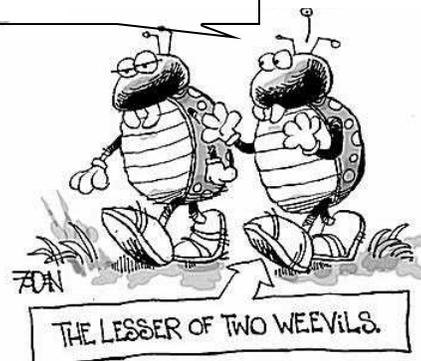
*Moderately severe:*

- Unable to walk
- Chest discomfort/ tightness
- marked constriction of pupil
- Muscle twitching
- Involuntary urination/bowel mvt

*Severe Poisoning*

- Incontinence
- Unconsciousness
- seizures

The Farmer's really worked hard on his crop. I think we should leave him alone.



Archives

## Compensation for endosulfan victims, State to move court

NewIndPress.com, October 5, 2006

**KASARGOD**—The State Government has decided to approach the court demanding compensation for the victims of Endosulfan, an organochlorine pesticide used by the Plantation Corporation of Kerala (PCK) on its 4,500-acre cashew plantation in Kasargod.

Chief Minister V S Achuthanandan, during the post-cabinet briefing here on Wednesday, said that legal experts would be consulted before the government goes ahead with the Bhopal-model litigation.

The Madhya Pradesh Government had earlier successfully, though belatedly, secured compensation for nearly 4,000 victims of the Bhopal Gas tragedy from Union Carbide India.

Chief Minister V S Achuthanandan was in the forefront of the struggle against the use of Endosulfan in the cashew farms of Kasargod.

The aerial spraying of Endosulfan by PCK on its estates is held up as the cause for a number of cancer deaths and other congenital neurological diseases in the villages near the cashew plantations. Endosulfan is banned in Singapore, Denmark, Holland and Sweden.

**LOTTERY SCHEME:** It has been decided to issue a special lottery and use the money generated to replenish the Chief Minister's Disaster Relief Fund.

The Chief Minister said that the Rs 10-crore left in the Chief's Relief Fund was almost over after the Rs 50,000 compensation given to the 549 families of farmers who committed suicide and 135 victims of Endosulfan poisoning.

From Farmedia.org, Bulletin 14

Bovikkana is in Muliya Panchayath (Kasaragod Taluk and same district). A local sports and Arts Club, Punchiri has conducted a survey of 40 houses in the village. There are about 156 persons



Eight-month-old Sainaba suffers from hydrocephalus.

living in these houses. Out of these 39 were found to be seriously ill.

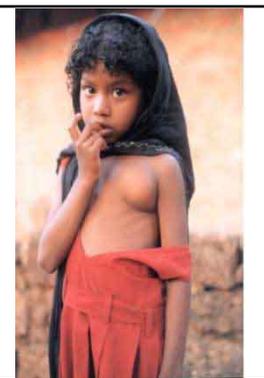
Mr. K.B. Mohammad, Club President, says, "There will be hundreds of such cases in and around Bovikkana. But you need to conduct an in-depth, house-to-house survey to bring this to light. Ours was a pilot survey. We selected only some areas that is very close to the cashew plantations." In fact in some of these areas, cashew tree population is extremely less (there are more houses than cashew trees), and the human dwellings are so close to the plantation. Such areas should have been no-spray zones. There are 8 schools in the vicinity of Plantation Corporation of Kerala's cashew plantation. No survey has been done here. The State Government's health department has to conduct a medical survey by multi-disciplinary team immediately.

Rajapuram is in Hosdurg Taluk of Kasaragod District. PCK has 248 hectares of

**A minimum of a dozen Kasaragod villages have thousands of poor villagers of all age groups suffering from various incurable ailments as a result of endosulfan spraying on cashew plantations.**

cashew plantation in the village. Here, in the houses very close to plantations (25 to 200 metres), in the last three years, 10 persons have died of cancer. Age group of the dead is 18 to 78. Soyal, who was a student at the seminary, Kottayam is the youngest (18) to die on 14th May 1999. A PCK labourer, Annamma (39), wife of Jose Karuplakkal, who had been working with PCK since two decades, breathed her last on July 7, 1999, due to Cancer. Chedikund John (50) and his elder brother Maththayi (60) are among the other cancer victims of this area. This may only be a tip of the iceberg. Reports are coming forward from villages like Nettanige, Karadka etc., about different kinds of diseases. If the available information is any indication, a minimum of a dozen Kasaragod villages will have thousands of poor villagers of all age groups suffering from various incurable ailments - without knowing its cause and being helpless about it!

Disorder	# of cases
• Swelling in Chest	2
• Mentally Retarded	8
• Persons with Mental Retardation & Born Handicapped	6
• Psoriasis	2
• Psychiatric Disorder	3
• Gynecological Problems	6
• Goiter	1
• Problem in Oral Region	1
• Sterility	5
• Hydrocephalus	1
• Born Handicapped	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>



**Sabeena has a big swelling under her left armpit which now and again causes her pain**

## Autism and Toxic Metals: Evidence of an Association

Dan Rossignol, MD  
International Child Development Resource Center

from the USAAA Conference 2007

### Summary

Recent epidemiological studies have correlated the prevalence of autism to environmental exposures of toxic metals. In animal and human studies, exposure to toxic metals can result in illnesses that parallel autism. Markers of metal toxicity, including antibodies to neural tissue, are elevated in some autistic children.

When metal burden, as measured by increased porphyrinuria and elevated urinary metal excretion, are evaluated and comparisons are made between autistic individuals and non-autistic peers, many autistic individuals demonstrate higher body burdens of toxic metals. Interestingly, blood levels of toxic metals, which reflect recent exposure only, are not typically elevated. This suggests that the body has sequestered, not excreted, the toxic metal burden.

Many autistic individuals have a decreased ability to efflux toxic metals; low glutathione levels and metal transporter polymorphisms may partially explain this phenomenon. Additionally, many autistic individuals demonstrate increased susceptibility to metal toxicity, due to decreased glutathione production, increased oxidative stress (which worsens metal toxicity), and defective enzyme function (that might increase the toxicity and body burden of toxic metals).

Furthermore, animal studies indicate that males excrete toxic metals less efficiently than females. Therefore, boys might be more susceptible to autism than girls due to the combined adverse effects of testosterone on metal toxicity, in conjunction with increased oxidative stress, and reduced glutathione levels.

These facts may account for the prevalence differences observed in affected boys as compared to girls;

whereby boys are affected with autism four times as often as girls.

Finally, autistic symptoms can, in many cases, improve when toxic metals are removed via chelation. Since the underlying causes of autism have not been determined, and autistic individuals demonstrate decreased ability to remove toxic metals, a reasonable recommendation is that individuals suffering from autism should be tested for toxic metals and avoid future metal exposures. These findings also suggest prevention and treatment possibilities.

Currently, a complete understanding of the role environmental toxins play in the expression of autism is lacking, and further studies are warranted.

### Excerpt:

#### Exposure to toxic metals can cause an autism-like illness

Chrysochoou et al. describe and 11 month old boy who was referred to their hospital for further evaluation of "severe psychomotor regression with autistic features of unknown aetiology" after a two-week hospitalization at another facility failed to diagnose the cause of his symptoms.

The child "no longer laughed or played" and demonstrated "stereotypic movements of the hands (kneading) and repeatedly bit objects or his own hands" and "took little interest in his surroundings."

After and extensive workup, it was discovered that four weeks prior to the onset of symptoms, a mercury thermometer had broken and spilled on the floor at home. Mercury levels were obtained; and it was determined that the child had been poisoned by mercury. [Chrysochoou et al., 2003].

What makes this case so remarkable is that the symptoms of mercury poisoning and autism mimicked one another to such a degree that this child was initially *and mistakenly* diagnosed with autism.

[full text is available from IHA or ICDRC]

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**“Many autistic individuals have a decreased ability to efflux toxic metals... due to decreased glutathione production, oxidative stress, and defective enzyme production”**



*"Mundo vitam dare"*



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*The International Hyperbarics Association, Inc., is a coalition of doctors, parents, patients, corporate chamber-industry professionals, hyperbaric center owners, and above all members who are committed to the cause of medical hyperbarics.*

*Our members come to us from all geographical areas with one common goal—to share their knowledge and information regarding the latest hyperbaric news. Our driving force is our members, who are committed to do all we can "to give life to the world."*

— "Mundo vitam dare"

# Member Ads

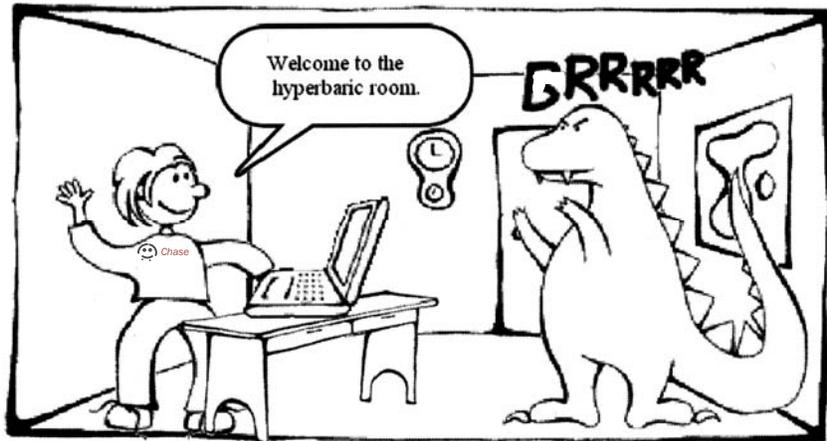
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## HBOT Room: the air we breathe



**Once again, Hyperbaric Tech Chase encounters a problem case.**

## LifeSource Family Medicine

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### **(Conclusion) High-stakes trial weighs autism claims**

The government's case is no surprise. It arrays scientific studies like chess pieces across a playing board.

"Good science does apply," said lead attorney Vince Matanoski in opening arguments. "What has no place here or in any federal court is junk science."

The Cedillos have their scientists arrayed as well. They also have Michelle.

In the early days of the trial, the Cedillos' attorney showed videos of Michelle before she received the MMR vaccine.

To the Cedillos, it was so clear. Michelle squealed with laughter, called out to her mother, played peekaboo and spoke the name of Bert from "Sesame Street."

The government showed scenes from the same videos.

Dr. Eric Fombonne, a child psychiatrist from McGill University in Canada, pointed out Michelle's lack of speaking, her fixation on objects, and an absence of joy on her face when her mother spoke to her — before Michelle

received the MMR vaccine.

"She is very abnormal," Fombonne said.

The Cedillos were prepared for this. They knew it would be hard for others to see Michelle as they saw her.

"There was more to her life than what was shown in the videotapes," Theresa said.

The Cedillos sat quietly through the testimony. It was a long day, and when it was over, they headed back to their hotel to take care of