

HBOT Study

Thoughtful House was approved in October 2006 to conduct a trial of the safety and efficacy of hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT).

The trial format is designed to use each child as their own control by using an extended base-line period of observation and testing, prior to treatment.

While relatively new, this format has been scientifically validated, and has in fact already been applied to the study of autism elsewhere; the reason for conducting a trial in this way is that autism is such a heterogeneous disorder. When measuring behavioral outcomes, what may have been a problem for one child (head banging, for example) may not be a problem for another.

This newer format fits the trial around the child rather than fitting the child into the trial. The study is underway and we aim for completion by mid-2007.

GI Conference

In October a group of gastroenterologists and autism experts met at the Harvard Club for a meeting hosted by Autism Speaks and the Department of Pediatric Gastroenterology at Harvard Medical School to discuss the management of gastrointestinal issues in children with autism.

A broad consensus was reached that GI issues are common and important in this population of children, and that the importance had

**Thoughtful House**

Center for Children

previously been underestimated. A letter discussing management strategies is in preparation and will be submitted for publication in the near future.

Holiday Party

Thoughtful House hosted a December holiday party. Santa appeared and gave all of the children stockings filled with diet-friendly treats and toys. Kids made crafts, and each received a photo taken of them with Santa. We would like to thank our sponsors for donating food and toys.

**Cochrane Review**

It's interesting to note that the authoritative Cochrane Review on the safety of MMR vaccination concurred in many respects with a previous report written by THCFC physicians. The 2005 Cochrane study concluded, "The design and

reporting of safety outcomes in MMR vaccine studies, both pre- and post- marketing, are largely inadequate."

The Cochrane Review itself looked at epidemiological studies only, excluding the body of scientific evidence linking MMR vaccination to gastrointestinal disease in children with autism.

It is notable that the Cochrane Review discarded as inadequate the much-vaunted Madsen study of MMR and some of the work of Fombonne and others.

In the *Journal of American Physicians and Surgeons*, Clifford Miller, BSc, ARCS, published a recent review of the increasing dependence of the Cochrane collaboration on commercial sources of funding, as well as various ambiguities and contradictions that arose out of press reports claiming to represent the facts as stated in the paper.

One very worrying aspect of Miller's review is the evidence that the legal aid funding for the UK MMR litigation was withdrawn on instructions from Her Majesty's Government.

This amounts to direct interference in a matter in which the government appears to have a liability with regard to compensation of victims of vaccine injury.

The myth has been perpetuated that the cases were stopped because the case lacked merit. This issue is currently the subject of question in the House of Commons.