

Controversy Surrounds Retrovirus/Vaccine Link to Autism

Greenwood, SC, Oct 14th, 2010 – Some parents and medical professionals are contemplating treatment of autistic children with toxic drugs based on findings that are potentially false. In a joint study released today in *Molecular Autism*, Cooperative Diagnostics and the Greenwood Genetic Center showed that Xenotropic Murine Leukemia Virus-Related Virus (XMRV) was not found in children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). This finding is in direct contrast to previous statements by Dr. Judy Mikovits, corresponding author of the October 2009 *Science* publication implicating XMRV in Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS). According to Dr. Mikovits, in addition to finding XMRV in CFS patients, they found XMRV in a “significant number” of autism spectrum disorder samples and speculated that “this might even explain why vaccines lead to autism in some children.”

The study conducted by Cooperative Diagnostics and the Greenwood Genetic Center analyzed 230 autism samples and 204 healthy controls. There was no evidence of XMRV infection in any of the samples, including the autistic children of mothers with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, in spite of using the most sensitive XMRV DNA test published (10 to 25x more sensitive detection limit than the XMRV test in Lombardi, *et al*) in addition to confirmatory antibody testing. Antibodies are the body’s natural defense against infection and are produced upon exposure to a virus. Antibodies are present even when viral levels are too low for detection with DNA tests. The absence of antibodies against XMRV is a strong indicator that not only were the patients not infected with XMRV, but they were likely never even exposed to the virus.

“When the first reports circulated that a retrovirus might be associated with autism, we were excited that the cause of at least some cases of ASD might finally be elucidated,” said Dr. Brent C. Satterfield, CEO and Chief Scientific Officer of Cooperative Diagnostics. “However, when we found that XMRV was not even casually associated with ASD, we became concerned that autistic children would be treated with anti-retrovirals based on what increasingly appear to be false positive reports.”

About Cooperative Diagnostics, LLC

Founded in 2008, Cooperative Diagnostics is a privately held company that uses proprietary engineering models to develop custom solutions to molecular diagnostics problems in global health ranging from oncology to infectious disease testing. Real-time PCR tests (DNA tests) currently offered internationally include tests such as HIV, Hepatitis B (HBV), Hepatitis C (HCV), Dengue and Malaria. For more information visit www.codiagnostics.com.

About the Greenwood Genetic Center

Since 1974, the Greenwood Genetic Center, a nonprofit institute, has been providing clinical genetic services, laboratory testing, and developing educational programs and materials. In 1985, research began on intellectual disabilities and birth defects and in 1996 research began on autism. The Greenwood Genetic Center works closely with the South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs to provide diagnostic services, treatment, and prevention programs to reduce the risk and severity of disabling conditions.

Source: Cooperative Diagnostics, LLC