

Science Advisory Board Mercury Review Panel (written comments)
Juan Ramirez
to:
Angela Nugent
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Dear Dr. Nugent,

I noticed that Dr. Alan Stern just forwarded information/readings beyond the deadline?

May I submit that the issue of cord blood as a useful measure of long-term exposure risk of MeHg is far less certain than is being presented by Dr. Stern, let alone to suggest revising the already low EPA RfD further downward?

The cord blood, as a measure of MeHg exposure risk, is a complicated issue. Depending upon whether the child is delivered above or below the level of the maternal uterus and the cord clamped early or late there can be significant variations in hematocrit. Some folks say as much as 20%. Since all the Hg is in red blood cells, it seems clear that such a variation might lead to substantial exposure misclassification if one relies on cord blood. Of course, cord blood also only reflects recent exposure (< 1 month) and if you are eating whale meat the exposure is likely to spike at intervals over time. So one is likely to miss the spikes.

So indeed the use of cord blood as a measure of exposure risk may constitute another unnecessary complication for the Faroe Island study.

I would like to submit this peer-reviewed exchange by the University of Rochester team (Myers et al. 2003) to be included as part of the readings for the SAB..

Thank you.

Juan Ramirez

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