

Consumers for Dental Choice

316 F St., N.E., Suite 210
Washington DC 20002 USA
Ph. 202.544-6333; fax 202.544-6331
www.toxicteeth.org

To his Excellency Pedro Catarino, Ambassador of the Republic of Portugal to the United States of America, 2012 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20036 USA

From: Charles G. Brown, National Counsel, Consumers for Dental Choice, 27 Aug 2007

The mercury experiment conducted on the children at Casa Pia – an event we apprised you of by letter of 1 March 2005 – has drawn official condemnation by the U.S. Office of Human Research Protections, which found that the University of Washington withheld from the guardians and parents the required information about the health risks of mercury exposure. Such risks, the U.S. researchers knew, include major brain and neuromuscular injuries, immediate or long-term. They cruelly chose children for this experiment because children show brain damage more quickly than adults. Similar testing was done in the United States, and disclosure of risks was given to Americans – but not to the Casa Pia children.

Ambassador, the children of Casa Pia are victimized again. We urge your Government to secure funds from the wrongdoers to cover the deception to all children and to cover future health problems some of the children – or their unborn children – may predictably have. Please convey this letter directly to the Prime Minister.

To his Excellency Jose Socrates, Prime Minister of the Republic of Portugal
Dear Prime Minister Socrates:

The U.S. Office of Human Research Protections, after a two-year investigation requested by Consumers for Dental Choice, has ruled that no informed consent was provided at Casa Pia in an experiment led by the University of Washington in Seattle (“UW”). Hundreds of children received implants of mercury-based dental fillings – whose terrifying risks were well-known to the two American professors in charge but hidden from the guardians, parents, and children. The ruling (letter attached):

“the informed consent document for the research conducted by UW failed to adequately describe the reasonable foreseeable risks of the amalgams”.

Those risks, according to the researchers themselves: “chronic debilitating neuromuscular diseases and even acute, life-threatening health outcomes.” You understand, Excellency, that “chronic debilitating neuromuscular diseases” can mean multiple sclerosis or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (Lou Gehrig’s disease), while the meaning of “life-threatening health outcomes” is obvious.

The University of Washington chose children instead of adults because children are “more susceptible to the neurobehavioral effects of mercury intoxication [poisoning] and would be more likely to show an effect if there is one.” Yes, Prime Minister, because children show permanent brain damage more rapidly than adults.

As noted in the letter from the U.S. agency, two experiments took place simultaneously, one on non-institutionalized American children and one on institutionalized Portuguese children. **The Americans received proper disclosures of**

risks, the Portuguese did not. Such apparent discrimination raises the question whether the experimenters felt the Casa Pia children would be powerless to seek a legal remedy.

The Casa Pia study was done by professors who, rather than being neutral or objective, proclaimed their support for mercury amalgam beforehand, at a public hearing in Seattle in February 2002 (we have the tape). Then they took various short-cuts with the children to “prove” the position they announced beforehand.

Since the University of Washington pocketed this multimillion grant then walked away, leaving no money for future health treatment, we ask you to act on their behalf. All the children merit compensation for being lied to – not being told the risks of mercury exposure, a determination now made by the U.S. agency. But some may need more, a lot more, for future medical bills. The children now have more mercury in their bodies, a situation that scientists know is a health risk. A certain percentage of people, between 3% and 15%, are hypersensitive to mercury. It is predictable that some victims, at some point in the future, will suffer severe neurological, neuromuscular, or kidney disease after the mercury is in their bodies for years. Birth defects in their future children is also a real threat. The state of California warns that mercury in the mother can cause birth defects.

We ask you, then, to take three steps:

- 1) Contact University of Washington President Mark Emmert, and Professors DeRouen and Martin (all can be found at www.washington.edu) to see if they will disgorge their ill-gotten gains and set up a fund for the children, within a charity located in Portugal – a fund especially for future medical treatment.
- 2) Should the University of Washington and these individuals continue to show indifference to the children of Casa Pia, the Government of Portugal should consider legal action in the courts of the United States on behalf of the children.
- 3) The Government should notify each parent or guardian about the findings of the federal agency. Each parent/guardian should now be given the correspondence and informed of their right to seek a remedy in the courts of the United States; each child should be given the same information when he/she turns 18.¹

Sincerely,

Charles G. Brown, National Counsel
telephone: (EUA) 202.544-6333; e-mail: charlie@toxiceeth.org

Enclosures: Federal agency letter; letter to president of University of Washington

¹ Consumers for Dental Choice is a nonprofit group focused on the health, environmental, and workplace risks of mercury-based dental fillings. The group does not represent individuals in court, but seeks via these letters to educate aggrieved persons here about the need to find a remedy. I neither seek nor would I accept any role as counsel for – nor any compensation from – your Government. But I will certainly cooperate to assist you in finding a remedy.