

By Marc Iskowitz

A UNIQUE APPROACH TO TREATING CERTAIN INFECTIONS, complicated wounds and strokes may offer an alternative therapy for patients with autism, according to the results of an investigational procedure conducted at the Sunstate Preventive Medicine Institute in Winter Park, FL.

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT), a method of delivering high levels of oxygen to the blood for therapeutic purposes, caused an improvement in the mood of a child diagnosed with autism, although it had no effect on his speech (*Hyperbaric Oxygen Report*, Vol. 1, No. 1). This case report was not published in a scholarly journal, but the treatment is significant because of its possible implications for the treatment of others who are diagnosed with autism.

The experimental procedure, possibly the first attempt to study the effect of HBOT on a child with autism, was conducted in 1994 by James M. Parsons, MD, medical director at Sunstate. The patient was almost 3 at the time of the case study, yet he demonstrated the developmental level of a 1-year-old and exhibited aphasia and withdrawal. Dr. Parsons conducted the study to determine whether there was a physical reason for this behavior.

After 10 treatments with HBOT, the young boy showed

improvements in mood and began to look at others and smile more. Dr. Parsons also noticed a sense of humor and increased social contact with others. In light of these subjective changes, he reconsidered the diagnosis of childhood autism, believing instead that the boy may have had an intrauterine stroke or a stroke at birth, possibly due to birth trauma.

Based on these findings, Dr. Parsons advised clinicians dealing with children who are diagnosed as having autism

According to a case study, hyperbaric oxygen therapy warrants a closer look for treating children diagnosed with autism



On the first day of therapy, the young patient lies in the hyperbaric chamber with his grandfather. (photo/courtesy Sunstate Preventive Medicine Institute)

to consider HBOT for their patients.

With HBOT patients breathe high levels of oxygen while inside a compression chamber, which allows for administration of 100 percent oxygen at pressures two to three times greater than normal, sea-level pressure.

The increased pressure causes the oxygen to dissolve in the blood quickly and effectively.

"Oxygen is such an effective healer," Dr. Parsons said. "Patients don't heal without it. If you raise the oxygen to 10 times what it would ordinarily be in the plasma, you've created extraordinary conditions for healing" in susceptible individuals.

HBOT is an adjunctive therapy that can be used in various fields of medicine, including orthopedics, various types of surgery, infectious disease, radiation oncology and emergency medicine. It can help promote the healing process for a variety of conditions. The use of HBOT for managing brain

