Reprinted from:

HEALTH AND LONGEVITY REPORT

May 15, 1984 Vol. 2, No. 9

More open-minded approach to fluoridation would benefit all

Is fluoride a dangerous poison? Or is it just a safe, effective way to prevent dental caries? The controversy has raged for decades.

A dispassionate stance might acknowledge good points on both sides, but the medical establishment's fervent backing of fluoridation and hostility toward detractors has tended to polarize opinion.

A recent study at the National Institute of Dental Research illustrates the necessity for a more open-minded approach. Researchers there say that increased fluoride content in drinking water does indeed decrease the incidence of dental caries.

Dental fluorosis

But the study also says fluoride increases the incidence and severity of dental fluorosis, a problem caused by too much fluoride. Fluorosis mottles the teeth chalky white with irregular markings and, in more severe cases, turns the teeth yellow or brown. Fluorosis is a serious structural defect that makes teeth wear down and break more easily and, once decayed, makes them more difficult to repair.

When fluorosis becomes severe it causes tooth surfaces to become pitted and rough. There is evidence, in the NIDR study and in others, that drinking water with a high fluoride content actually increases caries incidence. One explanation is that it is easier for bacteria to stick to the rough surfaces caused by fluorosis and that it's harder to clean out the bacteria.

Critics of fluoridation think the problems it causes don't stop with the teeth. Recent studies in Turkey and Japan indicate that systemic use of fluoride may have serious consequences for the rest of the body.

Slowed bone healing

Dr. B. Uslu of Hacettep University in Turkey found that leg fractures in rats fed fluoridated drinking water healed very slowly when compared with fractures in rats without fluoride in their water. In some cases the fractures still hadn't healed after 35 days.

Slow bone healing was attributed to inhibition of collagen synthesis, a necessary process in the mending of bones.

In the Tokyo study, Dr. Toshio Imai found that fluoride inhibits cell growth, DNA synthesis and protein synthesis in cultured cells. When cells are exposed to fluoride they multiply much slower than normal. DNA synthesis continues as before for the first 24 hours, then slows greatly.

Dr. Imai hypothesizes that the cells completed the DNA synthesis already begun at the time of fluoride introduction. But they didn't start any new synthesis because somehow the fluoride inhibited protein production.

Ethical questions

Aside from the issue of whether fluoridation of drinking water achieves its purpose, there is the ethical question as to whether using community water supply is the proper means of administering a chemical. Some people consider fluoridation a violation of their right to decide health matters for themselves.

Water fluoridation, unlike chlorination, which is done to purify, is unique as a means of involuntary mass medication for a non-contagious condition. □

Board of Advisors: Dr. Richard Cutler, University of Maryland; Dr. Stephen Cutler, Oberlin College; Dr. William Regelson, Medical College of Virginia; Dr. Arthur Schwartz, Temple University; Dr. Robert Terry, Albert Einstein College of Medicine; Dr. Richard Weindruch, UCLA Medical School.

Health and Longevity Report (ISSN: 0736-7449) is published monthly by International Newsletter Associates Ltd. All rights reserved. This publication, or any part thereof, may not be reproduced in any way without the written permission of the publisher. Each limited partner of the partnership, International Newsletter Associates, a Florida limited partnership, has severally agreed, for a limited period of time, if the publisher becomes obligated to refund unfulfilled subscriptions, to assume a portion of the obligation in accordance with the terms of the partnership agreement. **Publisher:** Sydney Narva; **Editor-in-Chief:** Elizabeth Philip; **Editor:** Larry Bonura; **Production Manager:** Becky Mangus; **Production Assistants:** Genevieve E. McGough, Anne Sindler; **Interns:** Linda Mackay, Allen Zeyher; **Circulation Manager:** Carol Aznakian. Subscription rates and information on back issues available upon request. Write to: Circulation Department, *Health and Longevity Report*, 500 N.E. Spanish River Blvd., #8, Boca Raton, FL 33431; (305)392-5411. Editorial Offices: Agora Publishing, 824 E. Baltimore St., Baltimore, MD 21202.