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ADVISORY PANEL MEMBER, PETER MANSFIELD, ON YORK REVIEW

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By Peter Mansfield M.D. | October 2000

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HealthUK Issue
10/10/2000

Water Fluoride: As Much Harm as Good

by Dr. Peter Mansfield

The report of the Systematic Review of the scientific evidence on the benefits and hazards of water fluoridation was published on 6th October. This was commissioned from the NHS Centre for Reviews and Dissemination at York University by the Department of Health eighteen months ago, to resolve for once and for all the heated controversy that surrounds this issue. Our Director got the unenviable job of sitting on the expert Advisory Panel, to see fair play.

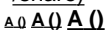
Fluoridation advocates and opponents alike were convinced from the start that this review would conclude, like others before it, that water fluoride is a safe and effective public health measure; but to us this seemed unlikely. The method of review was extremely rigorous, ruthlessly excluding any study that did not stand up and ranking the



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CURRENT PETITIONS

Together we can change policy. Sign our petitions to help us change health standards:

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<http://salsa.democracyinaction.org/o/2477/t/5221/signUp.jsp?key=2976>

survivors for quality. The term “evidence-based medicine” was invented in England by an MRC scientist, and Cochrane Reviews are the fairest in the world. Furthermore, the young team responsible for this review proved very capable, fair minded and ably led – remarkably so since all were trained in an academic tradition that assumed fluoride was an unmitigated blessing.

The most reasonable doubt about the process was its limitation to fluoride in water, since evidence gathered from Good HealthKeeping’s fluoride testing laboratory suggests most fluoride exposure is now from other sources – dental toiletries, tea and foods processed in fluoridated water. As a result the reviewers were unable to explore what diseases might result from total fluoride exposure. It was always unlikely that diseases such as cancer and hip fracture would relate strongly to fluorides in water alone, and the review confirmed this.

The main surprise was the wide extent of dental fluorosis – distorted structure of the tooth enamel producing unsightly markings. The slightest grades may be confused with other tooth damage and are not easy to see, but grades severe enough to cause concern – and therefore require correction – would affect one eighth (12.5%) of the population consuming water fluoridated at 1 part per million (ppm). The return for this is an increase of 15% in the proportion of people without any dental decay at all – an almost exact trade-off. Put another way, for every seven people treated with fluoridated water one more would have perfect teeth but one more would have fluorosed teeth. One in three of the fluorosed mouths would be severe enough to cause concern. (Much of the fluorosis is due to other sources of fluoride, so the proportion affected even at low water levels is quite high).

This is not just a dental problem. Dental fluorosis is recognised, both by the Department of Health and by MRC scientists, as an indication of early, more generalised fluoride toxicity elsewhere in the body. If it is in the teeth it is in the bones, where high enough levels may accumulate to weaken them. The studies reviewed were not continued for long enough to spot the lifetime effects of this.

There is no case here for widening the scope of fluoridation schemes. On the contrary,

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FAN NEWSLETTER

Sign up for our free newsletter and get monthly updates about how fluoride is affecting all of us.

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QUICK FACTS

MORE PEOPLE DRINK FLUORIDATED WATER IN THE UNITED STATES THAN THE REST OF THE WORLD COMBINED.

(HTTP://WWW.FLUORIDEALERT.ORG/CONTENT/BFS-2012/)

WINE AND GRAPE JUICE MADE IN THE U.S. HAVE HIGH LEVELS OF FLUORIDE PESTICIDE.

(HTTP://WWW.FLUORIDEALERT.ORG/ISSUES/SOURCES/F-PESTICIDES/)

careful research should be urgently commissioned to fill the embarrassing gaps in our knowledge. The Good HealthKeeping fluoride laboratory is still the only way private citizens can check their fluoride consumption – NHS GPs have almost no facilities.

If the Government are as good as their word the law on fluoridation will not change, and artificial fluoridation will not be extended. Better research, and greater alertness by doctors for adverse fluoride effects in individual patients, should in time end mass fluoridation for good.

Key Review Points:

- * Evidence quality was poor, and quantity very limited;
- * Most studies could have been biased because dental assessors (of both caries and fluorosis) usually knew where the study subjects lived;
- * Dental benefits are less (15%) than have been claimed (25-60%);
- * Dental disfigurement (12.5%) is far higher than expected;
- * There is almost no evidence for a reduction of social class inequalities by water fluoridation;
- * Far too little evidence exists to justify any assumption that artificial fluoridation is as safe as 1 ppm calcium fluoride occurring naturally;
- * The review does not tackle the effects of total fluoride exposure (except, by accident, its impact on dental fluorosis).

See the [York Review \(http://www.bmj.com/content/321/7265/855.full\)](http://www.bmj.com/content/321/7265/855.full) and [other reviews of it \(http://www.fluoridealert.org/content/york-review/\)](http://www.fluoridealert.org/content/york-review/)

Tags: [york review \(http://fluoridealert.org/tag/york-review/\)](http://fluoridealert.org/tag/york-review/)

IN EUROPE, FLUORIDE WAS ONCE PRESCRIBED AS A DRUG TO REDUCE THYROID ACTIVITY.

([HTTP://WWW.FLUORIDEALERT.ORG/ISSUES/HEALTH/THYROID/](http://www.fluoridealert.org/issues/health/thyroid/))

FLUORIDATION DISPROPORTIONATELY HARMS BLACK CHILDREN.

([HTTP://WWW.FLUORIDEALERT.ORG/STUDIES/DENTAL_FLUOROSIS02/](http://www.fluoridealert.org/studies/dental_fluorosis02/))

RELATED VIDEOS:



[Announcing the "FAN Study Tracker" -- To be released this Wednesday, March 12th](http://fluoridealert.org/fan-tv/studytracker/)

(<http://fluoridealert.org/fan-tv/studytracker/>)



[Ed Asner: "Fluoride Should Be a Choice, Not a Mandate"](http://fluoridealert.org/fan-tv/asner/)

(<http://fluoridealert.org/fan-tv/asner/>)



Ed Begley Jr: Many Studies Link Fluoride to Reduced IQ
(<http://fluoridealert.org/fan-tv/begley/>)

RELATED ARTICLES:

Introducing the FAN Study Tracker

The Fluoride Action Network is excited to announce the launch of the FAN Study Tracker, the most up-to-date and comprehensive source for fluoride health research, including studies investigating how fluoride affects the brain (e.g., IQ scores), the bones/joints (e.g., arthritis), the cardiovascular system, the kidneys, and the thyroid gland. Features of the
(<http://fluoridealert.org/articles/studytracker/>)

FAN to Release Industry's Hidden Fluoride Files

Over the past few months, Michael Connett, FAN's Special Projects Director, has been actively working on several big projects that are nearing completion and which we are very excited about. In this bulletin, Michael describes one of these projects, and tomorrow, he'll describe several more. The Secret History of Fluoride "Science" In
(http://fluoridealert.org/articles/industry_docs/)

Introducing The Naked Calendar (2014)

Purchase The Naked Calendar! The campaign to end fluoridation in Ireland is quickly becoming one of the most exciting fluoride campaigns in the world. Led by the positive creativity of Aisling Fitzgibbon (aka "The Girl Against Fluoride"), the Irish campaign has generated an unprecedented level of public interest and support, and what

[\(http://fluoridealert.org/articles/naked-calendar/\)](http://fluoridealert.org/articles/naked-calendar/)

RELATED STUDIES:

Fluoride & IQ: The 6 "No Effect" Studies

While 37 studies have found an association between fluoride and IQ, the following six studies did not find this association. Several points bear consideration about these studies: First, the study by Calderon (2000) found that fluoride exposure was associated with other indices of neurotoxicity, including impaired visual-spatial organization. Second, the study by

[\(http://fluoridealert.org/studies/brain07/\)](http://fluoridealert.org/studies/brain07/)

NRC (2006): Fluoride's Effect on Glucose Metabolism

The following discussion is from pages 258-260 of the NRC's report's "Fluoride in Drinking Water: A Scientific Review of EPA's Standards." Animal Studies (Normal Animals) Turner et al. (1997) reported a 17% increase in serum glucose in female rabbits given fluoride in drinking water at 100 mg/L for 6 months. IGF-1 was also

[\(http://fluoridealert.org/studies/diabetes04/\)](http://fluoridealert.org/studies/diabetes04/)

The Iowa Fluoride Study: Fluoride, Teeth, and Developing Bone

In the early 1990s, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) issued a large grant to University of Iowa researchers to investigate the relationship between total daily fluoride intake (from all sources) and several health outcomes of interest, namely: tooth decay, dental fluorosis, and bone health. Known as the "Iowa Fluoride Study," the

[\(http://fluoridealert.org/studies/ifs/\)](http://fluoridealert.org/studies/ifs/)

RELATED MISCELLANEOUS CONTENT:

A Second Look at Fluoride Exposure and Hip Fractures

In critiquing the York Review I spent a considerable time reading the literature on Hip Fractures and exposure to fluoride. I thought readers would find it helpful to have an up-to-date list of the studies published since 1990. While the evidence from these human epidemiological studies is mixed, when the issue is

(<http://fluoridealert.org/content/fin-138/>)

BMJ Editor: Get Fluoride from Toothpaste, Not from Water Supply

Fluoride Action Network October 2000 The following review by the Associate Editor of the British Medical Journal, Douglas Carnall, appeared on the same day that the British Medical Journal published the findings from the York Review (Fluoridation of Drinking Water: A Systematic Review of its Efficacy and Safety). Carnall's response to the study

(<http://fluoridealert.org/content/bmj-editor-york-review/>)

Letter from Liverpool Councillor on York Review

Note from Jane Jones: Liverpool City has 99 Councillors. They rejected fluoridation UNANIMOUSLY in 1994. Every single one!!! Councillor Paul Clein is a member of the NPWA (National Pure Water Association) executive committee and Liverpool is part of North West Councils Against Fluoridation. ### October 6, 2000 To All Members, Liverpool City Council
Dear

(<http://fluoridealert.org/content/clein-york-review/>)

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