

Fluoridation in Scientific and Historical Context

Letter to the Editor

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COMMENT ON EDITORIAL REPORT: MEDLINE AGAIN REJECTS *FLUORIDE* *

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[Dr. Moolenburgh was one of the leaders of the movement that ended fluoridation in the Netherlands in 1976. His English language book is *Fluoride: The Freedom Fight*.]



Dr. Moolenburgh

The recent decision by the National Library of Medicine to continue its exclusion of *Fluoride* from its online Medline-PubMed database of published biomedical research¹ should be seen in a broader historical perspective than just a difference of opinion.

In 1952, Dutch health authorities, following the lead of the United States, began fluoridating the public water supply in the city of Tiel with Culemborg as the control city. At the time, the dental condition of the Dutch population was atrocious, and the American plan seemed to offer hope that the problem could be substantially solved by the simple procedure of adding fluoride salts in the right concentration to drinking water supplies.^{2,3}

During that period, the idea of water fluoridation was also well suited to mainstream medical thinking. Ever since Louis Pasteur (1822–1895) discovered microorganisms as the cause of infectious diseases, a revolution in medical practice had taken place, and an all-out effort began to find substances that could eradicate the little villains. The first to achieve this great breakthrough was Paul Ehrlich (1854–1915), who discovered a chemotherapeutic remedy, salvarsan, against syphilis. During WW II the antibiotic penicillin, isolated in 1928 by Alexander Fleming (1881–1955), was massively used on the battlefields and saved tens of thousands of lives. The chemotherapeutic and antibiotic triumphs seemed unstoppable. When I began my medical studies at Leyden University after the war in 1945, the liberating allied armies had brought penicillin with them, and I personally witnessed the surge of euphoria about this type of remedy. It was thought we could eventually create an almost sickness-free world, with only old age as something that, for the moment, could not be avoided. Belief in magic pills that would eventually solve all health problems became paramount in medical thinking.

Acceptance of these types of cures became dogma and even near-religious faith. Since then, of course, a great hangover has settled in as microorganisms have

* The 2006 Report on Fluoridation of Drinking Water by the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences called for extensive additional research on the effects of fluoridation on human health. Three years later, in 2009, the National Library of Medicine continued to exclude research published by the Journal of the International Society for Fluoride Research.

become more and more resistant to antibiotics. Yet, mainstream medical thinking has not changed its views very much and still considers illness an enemy that we have to fight as we fight a war. (Remember Nixon's ill-fated "War Against Cancer"?) The weapons are, primarily, medicinal agents fabricated by the giant multinational pharmaceutical companies.

Exactly the same kind of thinking brought the explosion of chemical pesticides that were supposed to eradicate all of the nasty agricultural pests, but it has also succeeded in bringing toxic pollution to the soil, water, and air—and causing new illnesses worldwide in both humans and animals. One of the first who recognized this was Rachel Carson with her pioneering book *Silent Spring* (1962), warning against the devastation of the planet caused by unfettered overuse of DDT.⁴ This book signaled the birth of the worldwide environmental movement. Right from the start of fluoridation, another factor began to play an ever increasing role. Dennis Edeler, who received his doctorate in history from Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam on September, 23, 2009, wrote a 373-page dissertation titled *The Fluoridation of Drinking Water: Dentists, State, and Public Health, 1946–1976*.⁵ Edeler wrote that the population of Tiel was initially not informed about the change that had been made to its drinking water. After three weeks, though, the press learned what was happening. This arrogant secrecy was typical of a way of thinking rather common in the prewar and postwar period: "The state and its experts know what is best for its citizens. Leave it to us and sleep well."

This attitude appeals to one of the most deeply ingrained urges in a human being: a lust for power, which is a lust at least as strong as the sexual one. CS Lewis spoke about this, saying that one of the main seductions for man is to try and belong to that alluring group he called the "Inner Ring," THOSE WHO DECIDE, THOSE WHO ARE IN THE KNOW, the select chosen few ruling over those who do their bidding.⁶ This lust for power, not just partial power, but unlimited totalitarian power, quickly began to be a major factor in the fluoridation "debate," as promoters were calling it, but it had actually become a very bitter battle that still rages today.

George L Waldbott, MD, founder of the ISFR and the journal *Fluoride*, was one of the first US physicians who encountered this aspect of fluoridation. He was an experienced allergist who warned against the toxicity of chemicals used for fluoridation. He carefully documented symptoms and cases of fluoride allergy and intolerance in his patients, but he then found the US health establishment opposing him, attacking him, and demeaning his findings. In his book *A Struggle With Titans* (1965), he wrote about these encounters and also pointed out that industries with vested interests (like aluminum and phosphate fertilizer manufacturing) saddled with fluoride waste products were suddenly able to sell chemicals made from them to drinking water suppliers at a substantial profit.⁷ One could also see a pattern: the same names would pop up time and again in the book, first as high level officials in one of the polluting industries and then as a member of an agency or panel making decisions about the safety and effectiveness of fluorides for fighting dental caries. Careful reading of Waldbott's book reveals that many promoters of fluoridation have the same lust for power that has motivated so many over the years to ignore clear evidence of the harmfulness of fluoridation in order to remain in that prestigious and powerful "Inner Ring."

Let us also ask: Were the fluoridating authorities possibly right about the dental benefits of fluoride? There were some historical precedents. For example, endemic enlargement of the thyroid was found to be caused by a lack of iodine and also scurvy caused by a lack of vitamin C. (It is thought that Admiral Nelson would have lost the Battle of Trafalgar in 1806 against the French/Spanish fleet if he had not prevented scurvy by feeding his sailors lemons and limes.) In both cases, an essential nutrient cured an illness. But fluoride is not a nutrient, and tooth decay is not caused by a lack of fluoride. It is caused by diets that are deficient in vital nutrients and also contain too many refined carbohydrates. This fact was conclusively documented by the dentist Weston A Price, who traveled throughout the world studying the diets of non-industrialized societies to determine optimal diets for human health. His book *Nutrition and Physical Degeneration* (1938) is a must for every medical doctor and dentist who takes his work seriously.⁸ Price's findings on tooth decay and diet were also confirmed by the German dentist, Johann G Schnitzer, who managed to put an entire small town on a diet free of refined carbohydrates that resulted in a 90% prevention of tooth decay.⁹ One can contrast this with Australia, one of the most extensively fluoridated countries in the world. But Australia has seen the number of dentists (and their fees) steadily increase since fluoridation began, and today tooth decay remains a major health problem there.

The journal *Fluoride*, started in 1968 by Dr Waldbott, was his spiritual child. I knew him well, and he was totally dedicated to making it a high quality journal that would be strictly scientific, balanced, and objective. I expected it to cease publication after his death in 1982, but instead it has grown and expanded through the years. In my view, it is now the only really impeccably objective scientific journal dealing with medical and dental, as well as biological, environmental, and related aspects of fluoride. There is no other journal like it, as it does not follow any protected political agenda. But those in power do not like whistle-blowers, and they do not want the facts so ably presented in this journal to become available to the general scientific community or the public at large. Thus the repeated rejection of *Fluoride* by Medline for inclusion in its database.

In 1971, I documented the first fluoride victim in Holland during the Haarlem hearings deciding about fluoridation of my own city. It was a baby boy from nearby fluoridated Velsen with breathing troubles since birth. When the child was 6 months old, he was brought to me for treatment and was completely cured in one week with non-fluoridated water.¹⁰ The aldermen for health were at first stunned and then furiously said to me: "Why are you going public with these things? Keep yourself to your medical magazines!" (These publications, of course, would not publish our reports.) I was even threatened by the Medical Inspector of my district who tried to order me not to tell the public negative things about fluoridation because "it made the population restless."¹¹ So, right from the start, it was clear to me that this is exactly what the "Inner Ring" fears: that the truth will come out. Water fluoridation in Holland was discontinued in 1976.

I will close this commentary by offering my personal opinion as an 84-year-old physician with 54 years in medical practice, who also lived through the German occupation of Holland during WW II and saw what totalitarian thinking leads to in the end. When the fluoridating authorities (yes, those in that tempting "Inner

Ring”) finally begin to realize that fluoridation was founded on a hill of sand, they will behave like little children when the incoming tide demolishes their seaside sand constructions. They will shut their eyes and protest, “No, this cannot be!” Public health authorities should only be interested in promoting good health and preventing human suffering. Yet, from their actions, they appear more concerned with adhering to erroneous dogmatic thinking and maintaining their own positions and power. Discussion and debate with the members of the “Inner Ring” is useless and a waste of time.

To members of the International Society for Fluoride Research, I say be proud that *Fluoride* is not part of the self-serving “Inner Ring” and is excluded from it. Be proud not to be among those who pollute the earth and are responsible for the explosion of cancers, vascular diseases, and those other illnesses of today’s world that plague our modern civilization and will not go away with magic pills. Just as happened in Holland and throughout most of Europe, authorities who try to suppress unwelcome facts about fluoridation will be eventually be swept away in response to compelling evidence and massive public indignation. Therefore, keep enlightening the public! Keep your integrity, keep publishing honest science, and let the truth eventually do the rest!

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