

FLUORIDE ACTION NETWORK (N Z) (Inc)

www.fannz.org.nz

NEWSLETTER NO. 8 January 2007

Firstly, my apologies that it has been a year since the last newsletter. It has been an eventful year, as you will see below.

International News

National Research Council Report—Bad News for Fluoridation

In March 2006, the National Research Council's (NRC) long-awaited report revealed that fluoride jeopardizes health - even at low levels. Contrary to original undertakings, the pro-fluoride chair refused to allow a "minority report" that apparently would have been much harder-hitting than that approved for release. One NRC fluoride panel member was Tennessee risk assessment expert Kathleen Theissen PhD, has since provided some very helpful articles on fluoride since the Review, some of which have been used in the Ashburton campaign.

Although the Review was of the EPA's current 4ppm maximum contaminant level for naturally occurring fluoride, the Review's findings are relevant to water fluoridation everywhere, as the Panel could find no lower limit that would ensure public health safety. This is a crucial point, as the MoH and DHBs here try to dismiss the review on the 4ppm initial terms of reference.

Importantly, the report identifies that fluoride levels below 0.7 ppm can cause thyroid problems in children with borderline iodine deficiency – a problem common in NZ. It also raised concerns regarding bone cancer, in spite of Dr Chester Douglass lying to the Panel – claiming that Elise Bassin's study found no connection between fluoridation and bone cancer when it found a very clear age-related exposure connection.

Dr Bassin's study was finally published in an international journal in 2006, after 6 years of suppression.

A Chink in the Armour? Important ADA Announcement

The American Dental Association released a recommendation in 2006 that infant formula NOT be made with fluoridated water, following the NRC Review. This recommendation was earlier made by the Australian NHMRC in its 1999 report to the Australian Government. It was also recommended by Anderson *et al*, 2004. FAN(NZ) has had the calculations on its web site since 2003. Still the liars from the MoH and DHBs make up various stories as to why we should ignore this advice – they claim it is due to the 4ppm allowed "naturally" in US water supplies – except the ADA emphatically denies this and states it applies to 1ppm fluoridation. Full marks to Lois Williams of National Radio for exposing this lie by none other than Martin Lee, during a radio item on the Far North debate. Or they say, as in Ashburton, it is just through fear of lawsuits in the US – we are not that litigious here. Never mind the findings of the York Review 2000 (56% fluorosis with 8% moderate to severe; The NZ PHAC in its 2003 report on child health identifying 1 in 24 NZ children have "aesthetically disturbing" fluorosis). The significant point about this announcement is, of course, it is the first sign time the ADA has resiled from its position of "perfectly safe" – is this the first brick in the next "Berlin Wall"?

ADA Recommendations:

Infants - If liquid or powdered concentrate infant formula is the primary source of nutrition, mix with water that is fluoride free, including water that is labelled purified, demineralised, deionised, distilled or reverse osmosis filtered water.

Children - stay away from fluoride toothpaste before two years.

Young children should always be supervised while brushing and taught to spit out rather than swallow toothpaste, due to automatic swallowing response. (NB: the NZ Dental Association has for some years recommended leaving fluoride toothpaste on the teeth, to be eventually swallowed—poisoning the child!)

FDA Allows Dental Health claims on Bottled Fluoridated Water

The FDA has also allowed bottled water producers to claim that fluoridated bottled water reduces tooth decay, although not for infants. Yet the FDA has never tested the safety of ingested fluoride because the chemical was sold before FDA safety testing laws were enacted. Compare this with Australian fluoridation promoter John Spencer, who called for fluoridated bottled water to be made available to reduce tooth decay after his own research (Armfield & Spencer, 2004) showed zero permanent benefit from fluoridation!

Keeping the enemy at bay

The Far North

The Northland DHB has been working behind the scenes for a year or more, to get the Far North District Council (FNDC) to agree to a fluoridation “trial” in Kaikohe and Kaitaia. As a “trial” to determine a medical outcome (effect on dental caries; there appears no intention to monitor adverse health effects) this constitutes, in our view, a “medical experiment”, prohibited under section 10 of the NZ Bill of Rights Act unless informed consent of every individual is obtained. The Council and Northland DHB arranged for a Colmar Brunton phone survey of 300 households in both Kaitaia and Kaikohe. 327 voted for the trial—53% in Kaitaia and 56% in Kaikohe. In total 327 people out of the entire population agreed with the trial. The FNDC considers this “adequate consultation”. The matter was decided, not by the FNDC, but by the Transport, Drainage, and Utilities Committee of six members. Such delegation of a public health decision renders the decision ultra vires. The vote was 4:3 against the “trial” until the pro-fluoride chairman cast his personal vote to tie, and then his casting vote to approve the trial. Essentially then, one individual has decided to conduct a medical experiment on two communities. Local iwi were not consulted, contrary to the Local Government Act requirements. When challenged on this, and that the matter was not put to the full Council, the FNDC responded that “fluoridation is a minor policy issue, so it doesn’t require the consultation specified in the Act.” In terms of this so-called trial, the DHB has already said it would have to run for 5 years not 2, to be of any use – what a surprise! Let us remember that the Napier-Hastings “trial” has been running for over 50 years now, and fluoridated Hastings still has more tooth decay than unfluoridated Napier. We do not know which communities will be the “controls”, so the DHB may be planning the usual “before and after” scam, just as they misrepresented the Hastings results to “justify” a predetermined position of fluoridation.

Ashburton

With the election of a pro-fluoridation Mayor at Ashburton the Canterbury DHB and MoH have seized the opportunity to promote to the council the reintroduction of fluoridation which was ceased in 2002 following a campaign led by FAN(NZ) committee member, Don Church. Don has again led the campaign to fend off zealots like Martin Lee and Justin Wall. This has been an expensive campaign to date, with Don contributing considerable amounts of his own funds.

The MoH set out from the start to undermine the democratic process by boycotting the Council’s proposed 2-sided A4 sheet to go out with rating notices. The MoH claimed that Council could not put out the opposing view because that would be construed as not being impartial which Council accepted, wrongly in our view. This left MoH and CDHB able to use taxpayers’ money to flood local papers with advertisements etc. The MoH even funded a large “Smile for Life” billboard on the main street. It has been observed that when Councils ensure the public are informed, the vote trends against fluoridation. We obtained the A4 sheet put out by the DHB in Wanganui. For future campaigns, we need to ensure that we get Councils to insist on the democratic process and publish earlier DHB material if it is not updated. FAN(NZ) had around 10,000 (updated) flyers printed and Don arranged for them to be distributed to every household in the area. This has left FAN(NZ) with only enough funds to publish this newsletter, so we are asking for a \$10 or \$20 donation from members to rebuild funds for continuing campaigns.

The referendum results were inconclusive. Basically the rural areas (canvassed by a Council “response” letter) came out against fluoridation, but the urban area (canvassed by a “sample” telephone poll of 400 households) came out in favour of fluoridation. It was noteworthy that the urban poll revealed that, of those who considered themselves to be reasonably informed on the subject, twice as many voters rejected fluoridation. Consequently Council decided that the rural water supplies not be fluoridated but were intending to proceed to reintroduce fluoridation to the urban area. At the Council meeting where this latter proposal was to be further progressed the Deputy Mayor, assisted by Don, persuaded even pro-fluoridation Councillors to decide the issue by means of a binding referendum. Referendum papers will be mailed out from 16th February with the closing date for votes to be 10th March 2007. This of course will now initiate a further major campaign within the Ashburton urban area. 2007 is of course local body election year.

Canterbury

The Canterbury DHB continues to push for fluoridation in Timaru and Christchurch – I guess it must really irk Martin Lee that as one of NZ’s leading fluoridation promoters, his own jurisdiction remains unfluoridated! The Timaru Mayor, however, rejected the DHB’s request to re-open the issue, telling them if they were so sure of themselves to legislate instead of getting the Council to do their dirty work. The Minister of Health confirmed that there will be no legislatively enforced fluoridation.

New Mainland Division

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Some of those involved in the Greymouth and Hokitika campaigns have felt moved to establish a South Island division of FAN(NZ), to raise awareness at a wider public level in preparation for continued attacks on South Island communities. The committee is fully supportive of this. The South Island co-ordinators are:
Regional Co-ordinator: David Tranter (also Health spokesperson for Democrats for Social Credit);
Jackie Douglas: Westland Co-ordinator; Christine Banks: Grey District Co-ordinator.
This is an important step in establishing a better national profile for FAN(NZ) – we are going to need it!

Overseas Battlefronts

In 2005 and 2006 over 15 US communities rejected fluoridation in at least 13 States and British Columbia.

There has been a clear swing against fluoridation since the ADA's recent announcement, with some communities reversing their earlier decisions because of it.

In Australia there continues an ongoing push for fluoridation, especially in Queensland. Recent information has revealed that those who legislate for fluoridation typically use unfluoridated water delivered to their offices!

The Water Amendment Bill

FAN(NZ) lodged a submission on the Water Amendment Bill currently before Parliament, and appeared in person before the Select Committee. The wording of the Bill leaves the potential to (mis)interpret it in a way that would allow the Minister of Health to impose mandatory fluoridation. We have recommended an amendment clarifying that the Minister cannot direct that any specific substance, or minimum amount of any substance, be present in the water. The Select Committee was generally approving of our position that there was a legitimate concern, and thanked us for providing a suggested amendment. The Committee also acknowledged the legitimate issue of the Bill of Rights implications of the Far North fluoridation "trial".

AGM / Conference 2007

The FAN(NZ) AGM/ conference for 2007 will be held on the weekend of 28-29 April.

Venue: Christchurch. Please contact the National Co-ordinator on info@fannz.org.nz if you wish to participate in this year's AGM.

The AGM will be held at 11:00 am on Sunday, 29 April.

Nominations for committee and officers are to be sent to the Secretary by 1 April, c/- PO Box 9804 Marion Sq, Wellington. They can also be pre-sent by email to info@fannz.org.nz.

Please note that we will need to amend the Constitution to cater for regional divisions and officers, in light of the South Island developments discussed in the newsletter (above).

Proxy votes must be in writing with the Secretary by 19 April, and specify the nominee voted for.

Membership Renewal 2007

Please mail to The Treasurer, FAN(NZ) PO Box 9804 Marion Sq. Wellington.

I/WE ENCLOSE:

\$10 annual subscription.

Donation of \$____. Tick if receipt req'd: **Please note** the committee's request for donations to rebuild our funds for ongoing campaigns.

Total \$____.

Name:

Address:

E-mail:

Telephone:

Fax:

Group member. How many individuals does your group represent or have as members?

Note: if your group is not incorporated, you will need to have one member subscribe on the group's behalf.

Are you interested in becoming a local co-ordinator? Y/N Note: the MoH is currently pushing for 100% fluoridation: we are all at risk.

Able to help? (a) Strong commitment____ (b) Can help____ (c) Unable to help.____ (Tick one)

Needed: letter writers, speakers, canvassers, delivering flyers, organising meetings.