

The People's Pages

Reliability of evidence in fluoride debate queried

I MUST congratulate *The Star* newspaper for giving both sides of the fluoride debate room to express their views.

Other local papers seem to censor (oh, sorry, I mean abridge) letters from people who oppose fluoridation, if in fact they get printed at all.

Dr Dorothy Boyd recently stated in a closed-door fluoride presentation any statistical information between Mosgiel and Dunedin would not be reliable given it was anecdotal evidence that had not been peer-reviewed or published.

Dr Boyd also stated that the figures would be too small to draw any real conclusion on artificial fluoride, yet this information seems to have made the front page of a local paper (*Otago Daily Times*, November 4).

I am left feeling a little confused. Maybe Dr Boyd could clarify for me . . . either the

Letters to the editor

anecdotal evidence from Mosgiel can be relied on, or it cannot. If it cannot, please could you inform me of the reason why the dental lobby see fit to publicise [it]?

— Olive McRae

Fluoride Action Network
Waitati

[Abridged — Ed]

REPLY: I am concerned about the repeated misinterpretations of my staff's comments which also appear to cast aspersions on their professional and personal integrity.

As employees of Public Health South their job is to "improve, promote, protect" the health of people living in Otago and Southland — they have no other agenda.

We are fortunate highly qualified health professionals

chose to work for us because of their personal values when they could earn substantially more working for other organisations.

As group manager of Public Health South I have decided we will no longer reply to correspondence of this nature because in my view it unfairly targets staff just trying to do their best in their job and for all of us who live in the South.

There is an overwhelming body of local and international evidence supporting fluoridation as a safe and effective means of improving oral health.

— Pip Stewart

Public Health South
group manager