

May 1, 2008

## Comments on ADA Statements about Water Fluoridation

The American Dental Association claims that “Over 405 million people in more than 60 countries worldwide enjoy the benefits of fluoridated water.” (See: *Fluoridation Facts*, Question 55, p. 56 of 72 on the website <[http://www.ada.org/public/topics/fluoride/facts/fluoridation\\_facts.pdf](http://www.ada.org/public/topics/fluoride/facts/fluoridation_facts.pdf)>). This conclusion is based on the following source:

The British Fluoridation Society, The UK Public Health Association, The British Dental Association, The Faculty of Public Health of the Royal College of Physicians. One in a million—the facts about water fluoridation. Manchester, England; 2004. Hereafter, this will be referred to as the **BFS List**. Available at <<http://www.bfsweb.org/onemillion.html>> Examined on May 1, 2008.

This claim can be challenged on several accounts. Of the countries mentioned in the document, *Countries That Do Not Fluoridate Water*, dated May 1, 2008, several that do not fluoridate were curiously omitted from the list cited by the ADA. These countries are Portugal, Romania, Belgium, Hungary, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Norway, and India—none of which adds fluoride to water.

Of the countries that are included on the list, several were based solely on the presence of natural fluoride in the water in some portions of the country. These include (with the percentage of the population having fluoride in the water in parentheses) Austria (2%), China (15%), Czech Republic (<0.1%), Denmark (1%), Finland (4.3%), France (3%), and Sweden (8.4%). According to the dictionary, the word “fluoridation” means “the addition of fluorides to the public water supply to reduce the incidence of tooth decay” ([www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)). Since these countries did not add fluorides to the water supply, they were obviously not fluoridating their water and their citizens were not “enjoying the benefits of fluoridated water” as claimed by the ADA. Adding fluorosilicic acid (FSA), which contains lead, arsenic, and other contaminants is very different from the presence of natural fluoride in the water. Also, the levels of natural fluoride are seldom as high as the levels of FSA that are added.

Among the “over 60 countries” in the BFS list, cited by the ADA, that “enjoy the benefits of fluoridated water” are countries such as China and India, which have problems with too much natural fluoride and actively work to remove fluoride from the water. As indicated in *Countries That Do Not Fluoridate Water*, India regards fluoride as a serious health problem. A total of 17 of its 32 states have widespread problems with fluorosis.

The BFS List shows that fluoride is added to water in only 31 countries—fewer than half of the 64 countries in the list—yet the ADA uses the misleading statement that “over 60 countries” have fluoridated water. If one excludes countries with naturally occurring fluoride since they are not, by definition, fluoridated, then their quote should have been “over 30” countries. However, many of those countries have only a tiny percentage of the population that has fluoride added to the water. By its own admission, the ADA noted that only 12 countries plus Hong Kong have added fluoride to water for a

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significant proportion of their populations. Quoting the ADA, “Countries and geographic regions with extensive water fluoridation include the U.S., Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Columbia, Ireland, Israel, Malaysia, New Zealand, People’s Republic of China (Hong Kong only), Singapore and the United Kingdom.” Question # 55 of *Fluoridation Facts*. That is 11 countries and Hong Kong, hardly the “over 60 countries” that the ADA so frequently quotes.

In its *Fluoridation Facts*, the ADA stated that “no European country has imposed a ‘ban’ on water fluoridation, it has simply not been implemented for a variety of technical, legal, financial, or political reasons” (see Question 56). This statement is, at best, very misleading. It appears that the ADA is defining “ban” as a specific law banning fluoride. By this definition, countries would not have bans on putting arsenic, lead, tranquilizers, or other undesirable substances into the water. What countries do is to have a list of substances that are acceptable to be put into water, such as chlorine for purification. France provides one example where fluoride is not on the list of acceptable substances to be put into drinking water. Sweden is another example. Quoting from Gunnar Guzikowski, the Chief Government Inspector, in a letter dated February 28, 2000, “Fluoride chemicals are not [his underlining] included in the list [of chemicals approved for drinking water treatment]. If fluoride is not allowed, does not that amount to a ban?

In sum, 98% of Europe and all of Japan, India, and China (except for Hong Kong) do not add fluoride to water. The ADA’s statement that over 60 countries have fluoridated water is a gross overstatement, as is its claim that there is widespread acceptance of the safety and efficacy of fluoride. In fact, over much of the world there are serious questions about both.