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CLAIMS OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FLUORIDATION
AND INCREASED MORTALITY IN CHILE NOT VALID

Scientists at the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development, National Institutes of Health, have reviewed the paper "Increased Death Rates in Chile Associated with Artificial Fluoridation of Drinking Water" by Albert Schatz, Ph.D. The following information has been furnished by the reviewers:

No relationship can be established between fluoridation and mortality rates in Chile from the information presented in the paper. The paper contains numerous errors of interpretation and analysis.

Demographic information that is known to impact on mortality rates and that is therefore essential to conducting valid epidemiological research is not presented or analyzed. San Fernando (control community) had a significantly lower rate of infant deaths compared with Curico (fluoridated) prior to the introduction of fluoridation in 1953, and the same observation applies to the neonatal death rates. Thus, a fundamental premise on which Dr. Schatz bases his arguments is invalid; namely, that the two communities were comparable prior to the introduction of fluoridation in 1953. In terms of infant and neonatal mortality, San Fernando was not a good control for Curico since the rates were not initially comparable.

Dr. Schatz attributes solely to fluoridation 35 deaths per 10,000 persons per year. This is based on the untenable assumption that the only difference between Curico and San Fernando was the fluoride.

No information is given on the residence histories of the mothers or whether or not they actually consumed fluoridated water. In fact, the paper does not demonstrate that any of the neonatal deaths occurred in a user of fluoridated water.

Dental Disease Prevention Activity
Bureau of State Services