

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

Public Health Service

National Institutes of Health

Refer: PPB-47
November 1972

MISREPRESENTATION OF STATISTICS ON HEART DEATHS
IN ANTIGO, WISCONSIN

Recently, a news release suggesting that increased heart deaths in Antigo, Wisconsin, and other communities might be linked to fluoridated water has been issued by the Citizens' Action Program for Safe Wisconsin Water, Inc. The president of CAP is Ms. Isabel Jansen, an Antigo resident opposed to fluoridation. The National Heart and Lung Institute of the National Institutes of Health has reviewed the data presented in the news release together with other relevant information from various sources. Their conclusion is that there is no evidence of any relationship between the intake of fluoridated water and heart disease mortality in Wisconsin or elsewhere. The following is quoted from the Institute's statement:

The professional staff of the Epidemiology Branch of the National Heart and Lung Institute has recently reviewed the available literature and various unpublished data from the States of Wisconsin and New York which have a bearing on cardiovascular health in relation to fluoridated water. No evidence has been found suggesting any relationship between the intake of fluoridated water and heart disease.

Recent surveillance of Wisconsin cities with populations over 10,000 has shown that mortality rates in the cities with fluoridated water were no higher than in those without fluoridated water. This confirms previous studies in Illinois cities, and in a United States national sample of 32 matched pairs of cities where the mortality of residents for major causes of death was compared for cities whose water supplies contained naturally high concentrations of fluorides and cities with low fluoride containing water. Neither heart disease nor other major causes of death appeared to be related to fluorides.

Vital records of the populations of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Newburgh, New York, where fluoridation began in 1945, have been closely followed with no evidence of any unfavorable trends in heart disease or general mortality. Children in Newburgh and a comparable non-fluoridating city, Kingston, New York

were followed with annual medical examinations for ten years after the initiation of fluoridation in Newburgh, and no difference of medical significance could be detected between the children of the two cities.

Autopsy surveys as well as mortality studies have been conducted in areas of the United States where residents have been exposed for a lifetime to water with naturally high fluoride content, and no cardiovascular effects have been observed. Symptoms of heart disease have not been evident in the fluorosis syndrome, whether the result of acute accidental industrial exposure or prolonged ingestion of water in areas of the world with excessively high natural fluoride content.

The Division of Dental Health of the Bureau of Health Manpower Education, National Institutes of Health, maintains records of communities fluoridating their water supplies in the United States and is notified of any discontinuance of fluoridation. Discontinuation has been uncommon in recent years and has never been attributed to any documented adverse effects on health. Currently, approximately 95 million individuals in more than 8,000 United States communities are served by fluoridated water supplies. Much of this coverage has been achieved in the last ten years, at a time when the earlier rapid rise in national coronary death rates has begun to slow and reach a plateau.

Thus, the evidence from comparison of the health of fluoridating and non-fluoridating cities, from medical and pathological examination of persons exposed to a lifetime of naturally occurring fluorides or persons with high industrial exposures, and from the broad national experience with fluoridation all consistently indicate no adverse effect on cardiovascular health.

The Dental Health Section of the Wisconsin Division of Health, P.O. Box 309, Madison, Wisconsin, 53701, has available upon request a detailed critical analysis of the data and statistical methods used in preparing the material distributed by Ms. Jansen.

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