ADA

ADA POSITIONS & STATEMENTS

ADA STATEMENT ON WATER FLUORIDATION AND BONE CANCER

An unpublished thesis by a Harvard doctoral student researcher, reportedly suggesting a link between fluoridated water and the development of a rare type of bone cancer in adolescent males, has been the subject of recent media coverage. The Harvard School of Dental Medicine has announced that it will conduct an inquiry into charges that those findings were misrepresented by a professor.

The ADA is a longtime advocate of fluoridation as a safe and effective means of preventing tooth decay. It has been cited by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as one of 10 great public health achievements of the 20th century. Studies show that fluoridation can prevent between 15–40 percent of decay. The ADA cautions the dental profession, public health officials and the public against drawing conclusions based on a lone researcher's unpublished study. Indeed, the student notes in her thesis that there are several limitations to her study and recommends that the findings be confirmed using data from other studies. For example, she notes that the study may not accurately reflect the actual amount of fluoride consumed by study subjects.

ADA policies on community water fluoridation are based on the overwhelming weight of credible scientific evidence. That evidence stems from extensive scientific research and has been published in refereed (peer-reviewed) professional journals that are widely circulated. The research concludes that there is no association between cancer rates in humans and optimal levels of fluoride in drinking water.

The ADA encourages, supports and welcomes scientific investigations into matters pertaining to oral health. It will continue to monitor this development closely and if necessary will advise the public and the dental profession of any steps that we believe are needed to ensure the public's safety.

As the leader of a science-based profession, the ADA is open to new scientific information and welcomes the opportunity to address it according to the standards that prevail in the scientific community.