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Kamloops This Week

08/12/2001

Nobel laureate opposes fluoride

by Bob Shipley

BRITISH COLUMBIA: As Kamloops prepares for a referendum on fluoridation, a world-famous doctor has expressed strong opposition to water fluoridation.

"I would advise against fluoridation. Individual prophylaxis (treatment) is preferable on principle grounds and is as equally effective," says Dr. Arvid Carlsson of Sweden, co-winner of last year's Nobel Prize for medicine.



Dr. Arvid Carlsson

Carlsson was awarded the Nobel Prize for his discovery of how brain cells transmit signals to each other, laying the groundwork for improved treatments for neurological and psychiatric disorders.

He says fluoridation will harm some people and is not considered a proper

health-care measure in his home country.

"Fluoridation of water supplies would also treat people who may not benefit from the treatment. Side-effects cannot be excluded and, thus, some people might only have negative effects without any benefit."

"In Sweden, water fluoridation, to my knowledge, is no longer advocated by anybody. In Sweden, the emphasis nowadays is to keep the environment as clean as possible with regard to pharmacologically active and, thus, potentially toxic substances."

Carlsson's concern regarding the dangers of fluoridation echo the worries of University of Toronto dental professor Dr. Hardy Limeback.

Previously a supporter of fluoridation, he is now Canada's most highly regarded opponent of fluoridation.

Dr. Limeback says he believes ingested fluoride is not greatly effective, fluoridation leads to dental fluorosis from excessive fluoride levels and personal treatment is a safer way to administer fluoride.

Kamloops voters will register their opinion on the controversial issue during the Oct. 13 municipal election.

Learn more about Dr. Arvid Carlsson at

<http://www.nobel.se/medicine/laureates/2000/carlsson-cv.html>

Salt Lake Tribune

March 5, 2002

Editorial: Hard to Swallow

Public health officials are fighting two anti-fluoridation bills in the Utah Legislature with a familiar two-pronged argument: Weird Utahns have been bucking a trend with their dogged opposition to water fluoridation, and scientists are unanimously behind it. It is the same misinformation that helped proponents win referendums in Davis and Salt Lake counties in November 2000.

The truth is voters around the country have been rejecting fluoridation regularly for the past decade. Ten U.S. towns -- including Flagstaff, Ariz., and Modesto, Calif. -- defeated fluoridation measures handily last year while only Yuma, Ariz., and Utah's Centerville passed them. Even the City Council of progressive Colorado Springs, Colo., recently spurned

fluoridation, while the national Sierra Club is urging communities to seek "safer alternatives." Utahns didn't start bucking a trend until they voted for fluoridation.

An even greater falsehood is that scientists are united behind fluoridation. That notion has always been proponents' most intimidating weapon, and a federal health official predictably unsheathed it again last week while speaking with the Utah media. William Maas, the government's director of oral health, said he couldn't understand "why people don't trust the recommendations from esteemed scientific [sources]." What he and other fluoridation proponents know well but never acknowledge is that the many scientists who question fluoridation are every bit as "esteemed" as the ones who don't.

Dr. Maas, meet **Dr. Arvid Carlsson** of Sweden. Carlsson won the Nobel Prize in medicine in 2000, then joined a list of a dozen other past Nobel-winning scientists by advising the world not to fluoridate. In an interview last year with the Kamloops (British Columbia) Daily News -- verified by The Tribune via e-mail -- he said fluoridation isn't worth the risks. "Side-effects cannot be excluded and, thus, some people might only have negative effects without any benefit," Carlsson explained. "In Sweden, water fluoridation, to my knowledge, is no longer advocated by anybody."

It has few advocates in the rest of Europe, either. Dutch officials responded to a Tribune inquiry last year by forwarding a Ministry of Health study, which noted that "a number of questions concerning human health and the environment in connection with fluoride have not and can hardly be clarified." The Netherlands today doesn't even recommend fluoride tablets for consumption, and about 98 percent of Europe has rejected fluoridation.

How can this be when the U.S. Public Health Service is such a relentless proponent? It's possible that America knows something that Europe doesn't -- a premise not supported by [comparisons of cavity rates](#) -- or it could just be simple politics. European health organizations didn't stick their necks out by aggressively promoting fluoridation early on, so they risked no loss of credibility by backing away when questions arose about its safety and effectiveness.

In any event, the "esteemed" scientific community that pushes fluoridation is far smaller than it would have Utahns believe. From a global standpoint, it appears as odd as it has always accused Utahns of looking.

The following letter was published in the **Australian Fluoridation News**, which can be accessed online at <http://www.fierhorse.fsnet.co.uk/ausfnews/index.html>

28th January 2001

Swedish Nobel prize-winner against water fluoridation.

During the years 1977-81 a fluoridation committee under the Swedish National Institute of Health (Socialstyrelsen) investigated public water fluoridation as a health measure to be introduced into the whole country by law. Miljocentrum in Uppsala, an independent center for environment protection directed by Dr. Bjorn Gillberg, went into strong action against a possible political decision for public water fluoridation.

I worked unpaid with Dr. Gillberg (besides my regular work with molecular pathology at Uppsala University) as a scientific expert gathering and reviewing available research data and opinions on water fluoridation. Together with my wife Agnetha Sallstrom we documented the large number of fluorosis cases appearing in Uppsala, a city with about 1 ppm of fluoride naturally in the drinking water.

Professor Arvid Carlsson, neuropharmacologist at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, acted strongly officially against fluoridation, arguing both from physiological and pharmacological standpoints. We co-operated with him opposing fluoridation and can now be very pleased to tell that professor Arvid Carlsson on the 10th December 2000 received the Nobel Prize in medicine for his discovery of dopamine as an important neurotransmitter in the brain.

Carlsson has since the early 70's criticized Socialstyrelsen for its unscientific view on fluoridation and ignorance to consider the documented damage of teeth of individuals grown up in areas with high fluoride content in the drinking water. Carlsson's expertise and authority contributed very significantly to stop fluoridation in Sweden.

Other important debaters against fluoridation were Olof Lindahl, Professor of Orthopaedics, University of Linköping, Gunnar Gustafsson, Professor of Oral Pathology, University of Umeå, Peter Soderbaum, Associate Professor of Economics at the University of Agriculture, Uppsala, all arguing from their respective area of expert knowledge.

Professor Gustafsson is a pioneer on research on the biochemical regulation of inflammatory disease. He studied signal transduction in cells and pointed out that very little was known about the physiological effects of fluoride on the fundamental cell signaling messengers cyclic AMP and calcium ions, with which fluoride is known to interfere.

Furthermore, the findings of the Danish odontologist Anders Thylstrup,

Professor of Cariology at the University of Copenhagen had a great influence on the scientific discussion in the Nordic countries. His electron microscopic investigations of fluorotic enamel of various degrees, even the mildest, revealed unequivocally that all fluorotic enamel is hypomineralised, which is due to poisoning of the ameloblasts during amelogenesis in the child. The hypomineralised enamel with its porous structure reflects light in a different way than the intact enamel, thereby looking more white, and giving falsely the impression of being stronger.

The research group around Thylstrup has demonstrated that fluoride systematically administered during tooth development according to the fluoridation myth is an irrelevant preventive method.

On a hearing before the fluoride committee Dr Gillberg, I and Agnetha Sallstrom were successful in changing the politicians' opinion on the proposed safety of water fluoridation. Later, after having revealed that the experts of Socialstyrelsen were both ignorant concerning basic physiological knowledge and were bluffing with statistics on caries reduction and fluorosis, the decision process turned against water fluoridation in Sweden.

It is notable that Dr. Gillberg also has been rewarded for his enormous influence on the progress in environment protection in a large number of fields. For his pioneer work he has become honorary doctor at the University of Lund, appointed professor, and received a large number of awards, lately the prize of the Cancer and Allergy Foundation of 500,000SEK.

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Read more European views on fluoridation at www.slweb.org/europe.html