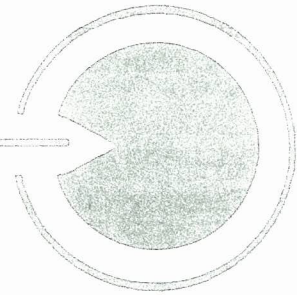


BIO-PROBE

NEWSLETTER



Volume 6

November 1990

Issue 6

NEW AMALGAM RESEARCH + CLASS ACTION SUIT STIMULATES MEDIA INTEREST & ADA RESPONSE

The latest in dental amalgam research, clearly demonstrating harmful effects of mercury from dental amalgam fillings, has generated considerable interest in the medical scientific community and in the media. In addition, the recent class action suit filed against the American Dental Association (ADA) by a group of its members has added further fuel to the amalgam controversy.

THE RESEARCH

Research teams at the University of Calgary and the University of Georgia have detected harmful effects from mercury exposure in animals provided with mercury/silver amalgam dental fillings. [See Bio-Probe Newsletter. 6(5). Sept 1990.]

A dramatic reduction in kidney function, within one month after placement of the amalgam fillings, was found in one study. Control animals, receiving glass ionomer dental fillings, did not exhibit any reduction in kidney function.

In the other study, a significant alteration in the normal status of gastrointestinal microorganisms was found in the animals with mercury amalgam fillings implanted in their teeth. The observed alterations could have a dramatic impact on the health status of the recipients as well as certain aspects of medical therapy.

Another research team, at the Royal Dental College in Denmark, has also been conducting studies on animals (monkeys) with mercury amalgam dental fillings. One year after placement and utilizing a different analytical determination technique, they have also

found a significant transfer of mercury from dental amalgam fillings into body tissues. In a report just published, also using monkeys, researchers at the University of Calgary have confirmed the Danish study and their own previous sheep studies, demonstrating the wide spread distribution of amalgam mercury throughout the body. Abstracts of these newly published studies are included elsewhere in this issue.

As a result of the dental amalgam research published in highly respected medical scientific journals within the past year, the potential impact of patient mercury exposure from dental amalgam fillings has become a topic of high interest to physicians and medical scientists. A number of researchers have shown interest in investigating the influence of this mercury exposure on their specialty area. Moreover, the medical scientific community is carefully observing and evaluating the response of organized dentistry to this revealing

TABLE OF CONTENTS

New amalgam research + class action suit stimulates media interest & ADA response. Ziff & Ziff.....1

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Electrical problems I. - Dental fillings. M. Hanson7

ABSTRACTS

Traces of mercury in organs from primates with amalgam fillings. Danscher et al.11

Whole-body imaging of the distribution of mercury released from dental fillings into monkey tissues. Hahn et al.11

A relationship between vitamin B12, folic acid, ascorbic acid, and mercury uptake and methylation.

Zorn NE and Smith JT.....12

Assessment of heavy metal nephrotoxicity in vitro using isolated rat glomeruli and proximal tubular fragments.

Wilks et al.12

FORUM

IAOMT Board Meeting12

© Copyright 1990 Bio-Probe, Inc. The Bio-Probe Newsletter is published bi-monthly. Sam Ziff Editor. Editorial office is at 4401 Real Ct. Orlando, FL 32808. Subscription price is \$65.00 per year. Postage paid at Orlando, Florida

information. Publication of additional controlled scientific research, some of which is already in progress, could have a further dramatic impact on the dental amalgam controversy.

THE CLASS ACTION SUIT

On Thursday, 20 September 1990, a group of dentists who are members of the American Dental Association filed a class action suit against the ADA for "Breach of Contract". The suit alleges two causes of action.

First, dentists who become members of the ADA enter a contract with the ADA. In return for the payment of dues, the ADA becomes obliged to provide certain services to the member dentists. One of these obligations is to provide accurate and truthful information on areas within dentistry. Such obligation is clearly defined in the ADA's own Principles of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct.

This Code defines that statements on information concerning the practice of dentistry shall be "competent"; shall not be "false or misleading representations to the public in a material respect"; shall not be designed "to give rise to questionable expectations"; must avoid any statement which contains "a material misrepresentation of fact" or which omits "a fact necessary to make the statement considered as a whole not materially misleading"; or which is "likely to create an unjustified expectation about results"; and, when applicable, shall be of "service to the public".

The suit alleges that the ADA has failed to provide accurate and truthful information related to mercury amalgam fillings and fluoridated water.

The second aspect of the class action suit is that the ADA provided misinformation in these two areas, knowing that the information they provided was inaccurate, false, or materially misleading and incomplete. Knowing that member dentists would rely on representations provided by the ADA as being accurate and responsible, such (mis-)representations have had a substantial effect on member dentists and their dental practices.

For more than eight years Bio-Probe has devoted considerable time and effort to gathering scientific information on the biocompatibility of materials used in dentistry. We have done so with extremely limited manpower and financial resources. The ADA has virtually unlimited resources. The information we have gathered has been equally accessible to the ADA.

There is absolutely no doubt that the ADA's representations on mercury amalgam fillings and on fluoridated water have been incomplete and misleading. Although our emphasis has admittedly been on mercury amalgam fillings, we have encountered significant information on potential harmful effects of fluoride, even in concentrations of 1 part per million or less.

Neither Bio-Probe nor the class action suit are calling for a ban on either product. We at Bio-Probe do not challenge, at this time, the effectiveness of either material. That is not the issue! The issue is what price, in terms of health effects on patients and the public, is being paid for the supposed effectiveness of these materials? Further, does the ADA have an obligation to consider, and report on, documented potential harmful health effects of the materials it advocates and promotes? Even more acutely, does the ADA have the right to denigrate or encourage punishment of dentists who question the safety of these materials advocated and promoted on the basis of incompletely reported knowledge?

The responsibility for the use of mercury amalgam fillings and fluoridated water rests with the dental profession. Incumbent with this responsibility is the obligation to investigate and be aware of all aspects, pro and con, of the widespread application of these materials to public use. It can be easily documented that the American Dental Association exerts a profound influence on activities of the dental profession in the United States.

Without any doubt, it can be established that the ADA exerts strong influence on its membership and that this influence must be accurate, complete, and not misleading. It is also easily proven that the ADA has, indeed, breached its contract to its membership. This class action suit is not only sound, it is absolutely