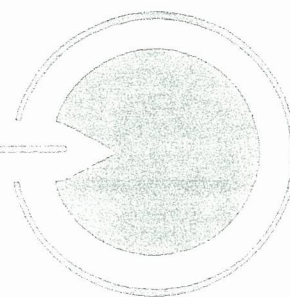


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BBC-TV 'PANORAMA' DOES EXPOSE ON DENTAL AMALGAM CONTROVERSY

On 11 July 1994 at 9:30 P.M. London time, "Panorama" the widely viewed and respected BBC-TV series presented a 40-minute major expose on the controversy over the safety of mercury/silver amalgam dental fillings. The program's lead reporter is Tom Mangold, who is a veteran, award winning reporter and is highly respected in his field. The data presented is so extensive and important that we have elected to reproduce, in it's entirety, the following press release provided to us by BBC:

W.H.O. ADVISOR CONDEMNS USE OF MERCURY IN DENTAL FILLINGS ON PANORAMA AS STUDIES SHOW LINKS BETWEEN DENTAL FILLINGS AND SERIOUS ILLNESS

Dr. Lars Friberg, Chief Advisor to the World Health Organization (WHO) on metals poisoning

tells tonight's 'Panorama' that the use of mercury in dental fillings is not safe and should be avoided. ('Panorama: Poison in the Mouth' 9.30 pm BBC-1). The programme also reports on new scientific research which shows clear links between the mercury released from dental fillings and serious illness including Alzheimer's disease.

Metal fillings are made of amalgam, fifty percent of which is mercury, considered "99.99 percent" safe by the British Dental Association (BDA), despite scientific evidence over the last ten years that the mercury leaks from fillings in the form of mercury vapour which is inhaled and lodges in the brain and the kidneys. Dr. Friberg tells 'Panorama' reporter Tom Mangold that he "does not know" why the BDA consider mercury levels in amalgam safe, and that "I think they are wrong." He is particularly concerned about mercury deposits in children's brains from fillings:

"They are definitely particularly vulnerable. We know that if you take the young child, it takes a few years after birth until the brain is developed and we know that the brains in children are much more sensitive than in the adults. I think that you should try to avoid to implant toxic metals in the mouth."

"There is no safe level of mercury and no-one has actually shown that there is a safe level. I would say mercury is a very toxic substance. I would like to avoid it as far as possible."

'Panorama' has investigated a number of new independent scientific studies, some as yet unpublished, which point inexorably towards the health risks of amalgam fillings.

The first is a new study by Dr. Boyd Haley, Professor of Biochemistry at University of Kentucky, which has discovered that small quantities of mercury from amalgams can produce changes in the brain that are identical to changes caused by Alzheimers disease. The mercury inhibits the efficiency of tubulin, a protein vital to brain cells. Dr.

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Haley tells 'Panorama' reporter Tom Mangold:

"To the best that we can determine with these experiments, mercury is a time bomb in the brain. We need to have an effect - if it's not bothering someone when they're young, especially when they age, it could turn into something quite disastrous. I still have one amalgam filling. But when I had them replaced I had them replaced with non-amalgam material, because I'm afraid enough of my own research and concerned enough that I don't want it in my mouth nor do I want [it in the mouth of] my children or my wife."

"I would not want to make the statement that mercury causes Alzheimer's disease, but there is no doubt in my mind that low levels of mercury, present in the brain, could cause the normal cell death and that this could lead to a dementia which would be similar to Alzheimer's disease."

'Panorama' reports on a unique, on-going study of a group of Wisconsin nuns by Dr. William Markesbery, Professor of Pathology and Neurology and head of the Sanders Brown Center For Aging at the University of Kentucky, which is investigating the link between Alzheimer's and mercury. He tells 'Panorama':

"Mercury is a toxic substance. It's a neurotoxin, that is to say it causes nerve cells to degenerate if there's enough mercury present in the brain. And the major problem in Alzheimer's disease is a degeneration of nerve cells. So it is possible although we have not proven this, it's possible that mercury could add to the degeneration of nerve cells, that is to the death of nerve cells."

An unpublished study revealed by 'Panorama' shows that dentists themselves are suffering neurological damage from their daily handling of amalgam. Dr. Diana Echeverria, a neurotoxicologist at the University of Washington, working with the co-operation of the American Dental Association, has shown that under rigorous testing, dentists exhibit classic signs of mercury poisoning. Yet Dr. Echeverria also believes that the mercury dose dentists receive from their work is not substantially different from that received continually by their patients with metal fillings in their mouths. She tells 'Panorama':

"The kinds of things that we have found are losses in function, associated with the ability to move manually very small things with your hands. A manual dexterity problem. Other kinds of really distinct functions are concentration - the inability to concentrate."

Another piece of research featured by 'Panorama' was conducted this year by Professor Gustav Drasch, a forensic toxicologist at the University of Munich. This shows that mercury from a woman's amalgam fillings crosses the placenta during pregnancy and into the brains of unborn children. Professor Drasch tells the programme:

"Well I think the implications are serious. It is a ques-

tion whether or not we have to restrict the application of dental amalgam to women, not only in child bearing age, but even before. If for instance, a girl of 15 gets an amalgam filling, this filling lies in her mouth for 10 years and all the time this filling releases some mercury. And if this girl got pregnant, let me say five years after, she has a mercury inlay in her mouth and the mercury goes to the baby. So it's really the question now discussed in Germany today, to speak about restriction of amalgam fillings for women from, let me say, 15 to 50 years."

The British Dental Association (BDA) told 'Panorama' that they are unaware of the work of Professor Aposhian of the University of Arizona who discovered that two thirds of mercury deposits in the body comes from fillings, or of the work of Dr. Haley or Dr. Echeverria. They rejected the work of Dr. Drasch as not proving that mercury deposits in the body are hazardous to health.

Mr. John Hunt, Chief Executive of the BDA tells 'Panorama' that he believes amalgam is safe. "No doubt about it at all." A BDA fact sheet states that the scientific evidence available to the BDA does not justify banning the use of amalgam in young children. Mr. Hunt confirms this view on the programme: "Yes, certainly. I've treated my children with amalgam and I have no doubt that when they have their own children they will also."

Asked about any link between Alzheimer's and mercury he says:

"As far as I know there is no association with mercury and Alzheimer's. We rely on expert advice. We look to a group of people, including our consultants, but also we rely upon the Department of Health and other bodies to let us have their results and their advice about results that they would read in papers.

"Before you say it is dangerous or poses a risk, you have to say that mercury in those places is dangerous. And there's no evidence to suggest that merely because it is found in the kidneys and so on of fetuses and young children, that is a hazard to health. I don't see why we should necessarily worry the population at large if there are no proven arguments one way or the other. The fact that it is there and detectable doesn't mean to say that it's potentially doing any damage. You can probably, with the correct analysis find a whole lot of other substances in the brain that perhaps shouldn't be there." (END OF BBC PRESS RELEASE).

After the initial showing in England on 11 July 1994, the Panorama program on dental amalgam will be shown world-wide, via "Lionhart" syndication. Panorama programs are sometimes viewed in 50 or more countries, the United States included. In the U.S.A., it is usually carried as a local-option program on the PBS (Public Broadcasting System) by "Nova".

In order to encourage showing of the program in