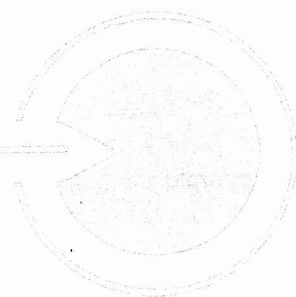


BIO-PROBE

NEWSLETTER



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NEW STUDY CREATES UPROAR IN GERMANY

Scientists at the University of Tübingen in Germany have announced the results of a recently completed study that has received wide newspaper and television coverage. One newspaper headlined the story with "One Million Ill From Amalgam?"

The study consisted of measurements of mercury levels in the saliva, before and after chewing gum for 10 minutes, in 17,500 individuals with amalgam fillings. Saliva flow measurements were also conducted and the amount of mercury ingested daily was calculated. Saliva mercury levels directly correlated to total number of

amalgam fillings and, in 40% of the subjects, exceeded by many times the World Health Organization (WHO) maximum recommended daily dose of 43 micrograms of mercury. In the subjects that exceeded the WHO limit, 65% exceeded the limit before chewing.

The leader of the study, Professor Peter Kraus, was quoted as saying: "In many test persons the level of mercury is 10 to 100 times over the acceptable limit. In Germany alone this concentration will be found in over 1 million people."

Not surprisingly, the findings were disputed by organized dentistry in Germany. The Union of German Dentists said that amalgam is thoroughly researched and that patients have no need to worry.

BIO-PROBE NOTE: Bio-Probe is attempting to find out if the study has been published. It should be noted that the daily mercury intake calculations did not include amalgam mercury vapor inhalation, which WHO (1991) has estimated to be 3.1-17 micrograms per day retained in the body. We would also like to point out that, in the United States, the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Standard for maximum mercury content in drinking water is 2 micrograms per liter. It is our understanding that a person drinks an average of 1-2 liters of water per day, making the maximum allowable intake of mercury from water to be 2-4 micrograms per day.

UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR FIRED OVER DENTAL AMALGAM!!

Dr. Dennis Lobstein, a tenured professor at New Mexico Highlands University in Las Vegas, New Mexico has been fired from his position as Director of the Total Health and Wellness Program that he had founded in 1992! Dr. Lobstein was removed after he had published

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three articles in the program's newsletter questioning the safety of mercury amalgam fillings.

In spite of emotional appeals and petitions from students and faculty members, the school's Board of Regents supported the administration's action and refused to reinstate Dr. Lobstein. The articles had enraged local dentists, one of whom was coincidentally the brother of the Chairman of the Board of Regents. According to newspaper reports, the local dentists had threatened legal action against the university, claiming that the articles hurt their businesses.

The incident has received considerable media attention in New Mexico, with headlines featuring: "Professor Fired After Bad-Mouthing Dentists"; "Wellness Director Fired After Articles Anger Las Vegas Dentists"; "Free Speech Issue Hits Hard on Highlands"; and "Ex-Wellness Director Not Reinstated."

Dr. Lobstein, not one to be easily steamrolled, has begun his counter-attack, emphasizing the issues of freedom of speech and academic freedom. His first course of action is to file a grievance with the university for appeal of the decision. In view of the issues involved and the considerable support he enjoys, hopefully no further action will be necessary.

TRUTH DISTORTED!!

Organized dentistry has made claims that, as a result of the activities of the Amalgam Stakeholder Committee, Health Canada has rejected the risk assessment study on dental amalgam by Dr. G. Mark Richardson as being unscientific. This constitutes a blatant distortion of truth.

In response to the shameful conduct, Health Canada sent a letter to Dr. Richardson denying these claims, stating that had the report been unscientific, the Bureau would not have released it. The letter stated: "Some reports of the meeting have quoted selectively from this statement, or have paraphrased it to imply that the committee rejected the report in its entirety as being 'unscientific', and that Health Canada concurs with this rejection. The fact that the committee considered the report to have been 'done in a careful and conscientious manner with methods generally appropriate for this type of risk assessment' indicates that the report was scientific." The letter concluded: "I hope this letter will serve to clarify that the Medical Devices Bureau has not rejected your report and values the research you have done in the Bureau's study of amalgam safety." The only point of the study under consideration by Health Canada

is whether the existing data are sufficient for setting a Tolerable Daily Intake (TDI) of mercury for Canadian citizens. Dr. Richardson had recommended the establishment of a TDI and had calculated the number of mercury fillings in each age group that would compromise the TDI.

As a point of fact, Health Canada has made it clear that it will not be bound to the conclusions of the Amalgam Stakeholder Committee. The tremendous pressure placed on Health Canada by the pro-amalgam stakeholders notwithstanding, the government officials realize that their first responsibility is to the health of the citizens of Canada. The extensive media attention devoted to the Richardson report, and the amalgam controversy in general, has made it difficult for Health Canada to ignore the scientific findings on mercury exposure from dental amalgam. Another factor influencing the issue is the public revelation of a previous report commissioned by Health Canada in 1976. This report also condemned the use of mercury amalgam dental fillings and urged restrictions on its use.

Although a ban on the use of dental mercury should not be expected, it is possible that Health Canada may retreat from a policy of total acceptance by recommending certain restrictions on the use of amalgam, much as has been done in Germany.

CDA ALTERS POSITION ON DENTAL AMALGAM!

The Executive Council of the Canadian Dental Association (CDA) has modified its position on the use of dental amalgam. The new information sheet will now include the following statements: "Although the scientific consensus is still strongly in support of amalgam, patients should be advised of possible concerns and provided with balanced information to help them make informed decisions about their oral health"; and "Alternatives may be considered for individuals who are immunologically compromised, or who suffer from a neurological condition or impaired kidney function. Although dental amalgam is not linked to such conditions, there is evidence that total body burden of mercury is of particular concern with these patients. Amalgam may be similarly contraindicated for workers with known occupational exposure to heavy metals or for individuals with greater than average exposure to mercury because of a diet which is primarily seafood."

The new instructions also include: "Although there is