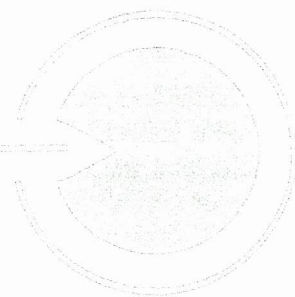


BIO-PROBE

NEWSLETTER



Volume 12

March 1996

Issue 2

HEALTH CANADA - CAVES IN TO CDA AND AMALGAM MANUFACTURERS

Health Canada's second meeting of the Stakeholders for the risk assessment of dental amalgam was held in Toronto on 16-17 February 1996. There could, however, be some question raised as to whether the meeting was conducted under the direction of Health Canada or the dental profession and amalgam manufacturers.

Although Health Canada had specified that the issue was to be addressed by Canadians, several non-Canadians made formal presentations at the meeting. These included a representative (reportedly an attorney) of a United States amalgam manufacturer and an "expert" imported from Sweden by the Canadian Dental Association. The meeting even featured a "moderator", who demonstrated his "impartiality" by strongly attacking the risk assessment report of Dr. Richardson and, with ferocity, the research from the University of Calgary conducted and published by Dr. Murray Vimy, Dr. Fritz Lorscheider and other respected scientists.

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The focus of the meeting was to denigrate Dr. Richardson's risk assessment report, as well as any and all published research challenging the safety of dental amalgam. Dr. Vimy staunchly led the defense. Eventually, Stakeholder Consensus Recommendations were put to vote, without consensus. Pro-amalgam stakeholders outnumbered those opposed by three to one, with majority opinion overruling consensus agreement, even though the press release was billed as consensus. Not surprisingly, the American Dental Association immediately placed on-line a "Position Statement" supporting the Stakeholder conclusions and stated that they "reaffirm its support of amalgam as a safe, durable and cost-effective material."

Two representatives of Health Canada sat through the meeting without interfering or providing direction. On Saturday afternoon Dr. Vimy, representing the University of Calgary, resigned from the committee in protest. Two other groups resigned in protest on Sunday, as did the International Academy of Oral Medicine and Toxicology (IAOMT) on Monday morning and two other stakeholder groups several days later. The IAOMT has also formally presented Health Canada with a dissenting position and recommendations, as have several other stakeholder protest groups.

The two Stakeholder meetings and Dr. Richardson's amalgam report have received considerable media attention in Canada. Fortunately, most of the reporting has been forthright, realizing and reporting that the Stakeholder meeting represented the vested interest of those supporting the continued use of amalgam. For example, on 18 February "The Montreal Gazette" quoted a pro-amalgam leader of Canadian dentistry as saying: "The odds are good that the anti-amalgamists will reign triumphant over the traditionalists. Maybe you shouldn't write this, but I think it's a war we're going to lose pretty soon. It's political pressure. By telling and telling about it, by reading it in the newspapers, I think

the momentum is there for us to lose that war and go on to other materials."

Health Canada had previously declared that it would not be held to the conclusions of the Stakeholder Committee, but would take the opinions into consideration. Dr. Richardson's risk assessment report represents a reasonable compromise and a rational solution to the difficult situation. It would be a tragedy if the power and influence of organized dentistry were allowed to sabotage the recommendation. However, it now appears that that is exactly what Health Canada is going to do. A 27 February letter issued by the Director of Health Canada accepts the recommendation of the establishment forces that there is not enough data to permit establishment of a TDI for mercury.

ADA HAS PATENTS ON AMALGAM!!!

Thanks to Dr. Ulf Bengtsson of Sweden, Bio-Probe has discovered that the American Dental Association owns two patents on dental amalgam. They are as follows:

1. United States Patent 4,018,600 Waterstrat Apr. 19, 1977. Method for eliminating gamma.sub.2 phase from dental amalgam and improved dental amalgam composition.

Inventors: Waterstrat, Richard M. (Gaithersburg, MD). Assignee: American Dental Association Health Foundation (Chicago, IL). Appl. No.: 617,594. Filed: Sept. 29, 1975.

Abstract: An improved alloy for a dental amalgam includes silver and tin and the additional element, manganese. The alloy is comprised of a minimum of about 60% by weight silver, a maximum of about 15% by weight manganese and the balance tin. Various amounts of other constituents known to those in the art such as gold, copper, zinc and mercury may be included.

Government Interest: The invention described herein was made in the course of work under a grant or award from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

2. United States Patent 4,078,921 Waterstrat Mar. 14, 1978. Method for eliminating gamma.sub.2 phase from dental amalgam and improved dental amalgam composition.

Inventors: Waterstrat, Richard M. (Gaithersburg, MD). Assignee: American Dental Association Health Foundation (Washington, DC). Appl. No.: 713,849. Filed: Aug. 12, 1976.

Abstract: An improved alloy for a dental amalgam includes silver and tin and the additional element,

manganese. The alloy is comprised of a minimum of about 60% by weight silver, a maximum of about 20% by weight manganese and the balance tin. Various amounts of other constituents known to those in the art such as gold, copper, zinc and mercury may be included.

Government Interest: The invention described herein was made in the course of work under a grant or award from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

BIO-PROBE COMMENT: The discovery that the ADA has profited financially from the use of dental amalgam is interesting, indeed. Although the amount of profit is unknown, the most interesting finding is that this profit was derived from research financed by U.S. taxpayer dollars! The National Institute of Dental Research (NIDR) is a branch of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, formerly called the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

WHAT DOES ADA MEMBERSHIP MEAN?

The following article is reprinted with permission from "The Farran Report", Volume 2, Number 12, February 1996, pages 24-25:



An Open Letter to William Ten Pas, ADA President

Dear Dr. Ten Pas:

First of all I would like to congratulate you again on your rise through the ranks to the top of organized Dentistry. Obviously you have given a lot in time away from self and time away from your practice--you have truly given a great deal to the profession of Dentistry. But now that you're at the top you must choose between following the massive herd of sheep that have been walking toward a cliff for twenty years or leading the sheep away from the cliff toward the future of our profession. When Republicans disagree with Democrats it's called politics, but when anyone makes constructive criticism of the ADA it's called bashing. If my punishment for speaking out on behalf of my colleagues is banishment from speaking at the ADA Convention in Orlando (per Dr. Morris Yates), so be it. That is one penalty that I will gladly pay to advance the profession of dentistry. But don't worry, I'll be in Orlando holding a "Banned in Orlando" rally and I guarantee you at least 2000 protesters.

I have two points. First of all let me explain my position to you. The first two dentists graduated from the University of Baltimore, Maryland in 1840. At that time 99 percent of dentists were blood letting barbers,