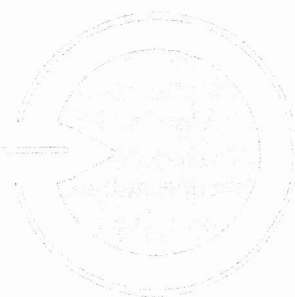


# BIO-PROBE

# NEWSLETTER



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## BBC "PANORAMA" VINDICATED ON DENTAL AMALGAM!

On 11 July 1994, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) show "Panorama" aired a program on mercury exposure from amalgam dental fillings. The program featured a number of medical scientists whose research casted doubt on the safety of the exposure. Defending the safety of the mercury fillings, were two representatives of the British Dental Association (BDA). Following the program, the BDA filed a complaint with The Broadcasting Complaints Commission, claiming "unfair treatment" by the program. Following is the verbatim text of the Summary of Adjudication:

### BROADCASTING COMPLAINTS COMMISSION: Complaint from the British Dental Association - Summary of Adjudication.

BBC1's Panorama: *Poison in the Mouth* broadcast in July 1994 suggested there was growing scientific evidence of links between mercury in dental amalgam and serious illnesses. During the pro-

gramme, John Hunt and Peter Gordon of the British Dental Association (BDA) were interviewed. BDA complained to the Broadcasting Complaints Commission that they and Messrs. Hunt and Gordon had been treated unfairly.

The Commission consider it was legitimate for the programme-makers to assume that BDA would have some knowledge of the current state of research in relation to the use of amalgam. In these circumstances the Commission do not find that Messrs. Hunt and Gordon were treated unfairly in the programme's use of an interview although they had not been given full notice of all the studies to be discussed. Nor do the Commission find unfairness in the fact that the programme showed Messrs. Hunt and Gordon to be clearly unaware of the existence of two of the studies, as that was the truth of the matter.

The Commission find no unfairness in the way in which the programme referred to the studies which criticized the use of dental amalgam or in the actual contributions from experts. BDA's own contribution was shown as representing the opposing view, which supported the continued use of dental amalgam. However, the Commission consider that viewers might not have realized that BDA's view was one which was widely accepted and that BDA's advice on amalgam safety corresponded with that given by other dental associations. The programme's failure to emphasize that important fact and its suggestion that BDA believed there to be a safe level of mercury, when in fact BDA had said only that amalgam was safe for use in dentistry, led to some unfairness to BDA.

You can get a copy of the full adjudication by sending a stamped addressed envelope to: Broadcasting Complaints Commission, 7 The Sanctuary, London, SW1P 3JS. 4 September 1996.

## Table of Contents

BBC1's "PANORAMA" vindicated on dental amalgam.....	1
California Dental Board drops case against Dr. Ed. Arana.....	2
Public Health Concern.....	2
Behavioral effects of fluoride.....	3
<b>SCIENCE:</b>	
Detection and quantitation by lysis-filtration of bacteremia after different oral surgical procedures. Heindahl A. et al .....	6
Profiling of propionibacterium acnes recovered from root canal and blood during and after endodontic treatment. Debelian et al. ....	6
Systemic diseases caused by oral microorganisms. Debelian et al. ....	7
Bacteremia in conjunction with endodontic therapy. Debelian .....	7
Chronic elemental mercury intoxication: Neuropsychological follow up case study. Hua MS; Huang CC; Yang YJ.....	7

### FORUM:

IAOMT 1997 Spring Symposium .....	8
The American Academy of Biological Dentistry Benefit Symposium for Dr. Ed Arana .....	8

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**BIO-PROBE COMMENT:** The Panorama program was shown widely throughout British Commonwealth countries, as well as some countries in Europe. Messrs. Hunt and Gordon of the BDA were obviously poorly informed on the published science on the subject, which was verified by the Commission. The concession that the program did not make it clear that the dental societies of other countries share the BDA's view is minor, indeed. In substance, Panorama was clearly vindicated.

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### **CALIFORNIA DENTAL BOARD DROPS CASE AGAINST DR. ED ARANA!!!**

Charles Brown and Jim Turner, attorneys from the law firm Swankin & Turner, have successfully persuaded the California Dental Board to drop its attack against Dr. Ed Arana in California. The decision, rendered on 19 November 1996, had been initiated by a complaint filed by another dentist, without patient agreement. [ED NOTE: Dr. Arana, long a stalwart leader in advanced dental therapy, has recently suffered a debilitating stroke, possibly induced by stress from this BOD attack. A number of respected speakers have donated their services for meeting to benefit Dr. Arana. See "Forum" below.]

This is the first definitive victory for the *Consumer Dental Choice Project*, which includes the attorneys of Swankin & Turner, along with a number of consumer advocate groups, including *Dental Amalgam Mystery Syndrome (DAMS)* and *Citizens for Health*. The strategy used in the Arana case involved applying emerging evidence from Health Canada and excellent testimony from scientists like Dr. Murray Vimy and Dr. Boyd Haley to show that the Board had a losing case.

The Consumer Dental Choice Project has also initiated several other actions. Notably, a letter was sent by attorney Charles Brown to the Attorney General (AG) offices of all fifty states, requesting their position on Mercury-Free Dentistry. Mr. Brown, a former State Attorney General himself, intends to focus the AG offices on Dental Board attacks on mercury-free dentists and to steer the issue from the local dental boards to a national forum.

Charles Brown has also traveled to the State of Iowa several times in recent weeks. He, along with Rene Mauser and other citizen activists have met with the Iowa Attorney General, the Governor's Legal Counsel and several State Legislators, as well as the Executive Director and the Legal Counsel for the Board of Dentistry. Their focus is on the incor-

poration of the American Dental Association's (ADA) Code of Ethics position on dental amalgam into the Dental Regulations of the State of Iowa. Since the ADA is a voluntary organization, that action raises issues of possible restraint of trade and violation of Federal Commerce regulations. More recently, the points were argued before the Iowa Board of Dentistry at its meeting on 16 January 1997. A large group of people were present to support the efforts of Mr. Brown and Ms. Mauser.

To support the work of the *Consumer Dental Choice Project* your tax deductible can be sent to: 1424 16th St., NW, Suite 105, Washington, DC 20036.

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### **PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERN!**

The following letter to Governor Gary Johnson of New Mexico is being provided with the permission of its author, Dennis Lobstein, Ph.D. It was published in The Santa Fe New Mexican as a *Letter To The Editor*:

Dear Governor Johnson:

We do not need to repeat the medieval Spanish Inquisition in 21st Century New Mexico. Both the United States and New Mexico Constitutions protect our civil liberties. However, several New Mexico Highlands University administrators apparently believe they are above the law. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is prepared to litigate to uphold constitutional law.

Last January you, along with Senators Bingaman and Domenici, signed a Quality New Mexico Award for the New Mexico Highlands University's Total Health and Wellness (THAW) Program, which I founded as my teaching and research laboratory. THAW also served as a powerful community service to promote healthy lifestyle choices. When the university became self-insured to promote employee wellness, due in part to my design, the underwriter for the university's health insurance noted that THAW was on the "cutting edge of wellness programs, not only in New Mexico, but in the whole Southwestern United States."

Suddenly, without warning that my position was in jeopardy, I was removed as director of the THAW Program - because President Selimo Rael, Vice President John Pacheco, and Dean Jim Abreu, under pressure from local pro-mercury dentists, didn't like information I published about the health risks of dental mercury amalgam. The THAW student staff resigned in protest. Students, clients, and local physicians all signed petitions to bring me back as