

NEW RESEARCH CONCLUDES NO LINK BETWEEN FLUORIDE AND OSTEOSARCOMA

Recently-published research from Harvard University researcher, Chester Douglass, concludes that there is no correlation between fluoride and osteosarcoma, a rare bone cancer. The International and American Associations for Dental Research provided some commonly-asked questions that may be asked about correlations between fluoride and cancer.

Q: Didn't a study published by Dr. Elise Bassin in 2006 find a link between boys who drank fluoridated water and an increased risk of bone cancer?

A: First, Bassin and the other co-authors of that study called it "an exploratory analysis," and they noted, "Further research is required to confirm or refute this observation." Second, the Bassin study was based on data collected retrospectively (after the fact) from patients or family members, meaning the fluoride exposure was estimated by recalling residences where the patient had lived. The fact that fluoride exposures were estimated and not confirmed makes such data somewhat unreliable.

This new study used a much more reliable measure of individual fluoride exposure by measuring it directly in bone, not estimating it by memories of residence history linked to water department records. This new study adds to the weight of evidence of other studies that have not shown an association between fluoride exposure and osteosarcoma and reassures us that fluoride is not a cause of cancer.

Q: Even if fluoride doesn't cause osteosarcoma, couldn't it still be causing other forms of cancer?

A: In its 2006 report, the National Research Council concluded that if there was any type of cancer that fluoride might be linked to, it would likely be osteosarcoma. Considering that this study finds no such link, it gives us confidence that fluoride is unlikely to cause any form of cancer.

Q: The control group in the Harvard study also had tumors. Why was that and have you considered that fluoride exposure caused those tumors?

A: Getting samples of bone from healthy people is difficult and doing so could raise ethical concerns. None of the cancers in the control group of patients has ever been linked in scientific literature to fluoride exposure, so there is no scientific basis for anyone to claim such a connection or to doubt the soundness of this study.

Q: Chester Douglass was one of the co-authors of this study, and we believe he engaged in a cover-up to keep Bassin's findings from the public. So why should we take this new study seriously?

A: The study's design was approved by the National Cancer Institute and was funded by three divisions of the National Institutes of Health. The allegation related to Professor Douglass was thoroughly investigated by Harvard University and was found to have no merit. The sound design of this study and quality of the analysis speaks for themselves.