

FLUORIDE POISONING: IS FLUORIDE IN YOUR DRINKING WATER —AND FROM OTHER SOURCES—MAKING YOU SICK?

By Bruce Spittle^a

Reviewed by Christopher Neurath^b

Debate over the existence of fluoride hypersensitivity has simmered since the early 1950s. At that time Dr George L Waldbott began publishing clinical case reports of patients with skin rashes, gastrointestinal disturbances, headache, and fatigue after drinking artificially fluoridated water with just 1 mg/L of fluoride.

Dr Bruce Spittle's book *Fluoride Poisoning* focuses on this syndrome, compiling important data from decades past to the present. Health care providers, scientific researchers, advocates on both sides of the fluoride debate, and individuals who believe they may be sensitive to fluoride can benefit from this book.

Spittle's book brings together most of Waldbott's case reports plus reports by others initially published in a wide range of research papers, reviews, and books. It is a great convenience to have all of this information gathered in one short volume. The additional studies include case reports and syndrome descriptions from Drs Petraborg, Susheela, Moolenburgh, Grimbergen, and Spittle himself. An omission is discussion of Dr Leo Spira's work that began in the 1920s. Spira's own book published in 1953 is now readily available again so readers may want to refer to it as an interesting historical adjunct to *Fluoride Poisoning*.¹

Spittle considers criticisms against the evidence that some people are especially sensitive to fluoride. In particular, he responds to the main concern that symptoms are psychosomatic in origin. This charge is adequately addressed by the case reports that describe blinding of the subject and sometimes also the experimenter. Such double blinding is the "gold standard" ruling out bias and explanations such as psychosomaticism.

While fluoridation proponents often deny the validity of case report evidence, even when of high quality, they have almost never undertaken their own studies to find out whether some people have fluoride sensitivity. One important exception

^aBruce Spittle. *Fluoride Poisoning: is fluoride in your drinking water—and from other sources—making you sick?* Forewords by Albert W Burgstahler and AK Susheela. Illustrated with 50 b/w figures, vi + 66 pages including index; 2008. Published by Paua Press Limited, 727 Brighton Road, Ocean View, Dunedin 9035, New Zealand (<http://www.pauapress.com>). ISBN 978-0-473-12991-0.

Recommended Retail Price (RRP): £7.99, €10.99, US\$15.99, CAN\$15.99, A\$17.99, NZ\$19.99, and J¥1699. Available for the RRP plus shipping from www.RenaissanceBooks.co.nz and www.AbeBooks.com. Also available from the author for the special prices of £4.99, €6.99, US\$9.99, CAN\$9.99, A\$10.99, NZ\$11.99, and J¥1099, including shipping, if paid for by cash, by cheque made out to Bruce Spittle, 727 Brighton Road, Ocean View, Dunedin 9035, New Zealand or by PayPal to spittle@es.co.nz.

Also published by Paua Press Limited is an abridged version, *Fluoride Fatigue*, illustrated with 13 b/w figures, vi + 32 pages including index. ISBN 978-0-473-13092-3. RRP: £4.99, €5.99, US\$8.99, CAN\$8.99, A\$9.99, NZ\$10.99, and J¥899. This is also available for the RRP plus shipping from www.RenaissanceBooks.co.nz and www.AbeBooks.com or directly from the author as above, including shipping, for the special prices of £2.99, €3.99, US\$5.99, CAN\$5.99, A\$6.99, NZ\$7.99, and J¥699.

The prices are the same for the revised 2nd printings, January 2008, (*Fluoride Poisoning: is fluoride in your drinking water—and from other sources—making you sick?* Illustrated with 63 b/w figures, vi + 78 pages including index; *Fluoride Fatigue*, illustrated with 46 b/w figures, vi + 62 pages including index.

^bCorrespondence: Christopher Neurath, Research Director, American Environmental Health Studies Project, 82 Judson Street, Canton, NY, 13617, USA; Associate Editor, *Fluoride*. E-mail: cneurath@AmericanHealthStudies.org

was Dr Reuben Feltman, a dental researcher who conducted a large study in the 1950s with over 1000 pregnant women and their children.² The main goal of his investigation was to find out whether systemic fluoride, ingested in the form of daily tablets, reduced tooth decay. However, his study included clinical observations that revealed about 1% of his subjects were sensitive to fluoride at a dose of 1 mg of fluoride ion/day. Feltman described symptoms identical to those reported by Waldbott and others:

“One percent of our cases reacted adversely to the fluoride. By the use of placebos, it was definitely established that the fluoride and not the binder was the causative agent. These reactions, occurring in gravid women and in children of all ages in the study group affected the dermatologic, gastro-intestinal and neurological systems. Eczema, atopic dermatitis, urticaria, epigastric distress, emesis, and headache have all occurred with the use of fluoride and disappeared upon the use of placebo tablets, only to recur when the fluoride tablet was, unknowingly to the patient, given again.”³

Feltman’s findings are important because they came out of a high quality study conducted by dental supporters of fluoride. Repeated blind challenges, just as in some of the cases described by Waldbott, Moolenburgh, and others, convinced Feltman that the syndrome was not psychosomatic and was caused by fluoride rather than other chemicals.

Spittle provides further evidence that fluoride sensitivity is real in an interesting section on animal case reports. These concern domestic and pet animals, not laboratory animals. The animals were, just like humans, exposed to artificially fluoridated drinking water. Species included chinchillas, alligators, caimans, rats, and horses. Spittle points out that it would be hard to dismiss the observed symptoms as psychosomatic, since presumably the animals had no awareness that their water had been altered with added fluoride.

Spittle also discusses other adverse health effects of fluoride besides hypersensitivity, but he does not have enough space to present more than a brief summary of these effects. The recent US National Research Council report, *Fluoride in Drinking Water: A Scientific Review of EPA’s Standards*, came to 507 pages, yet even that must be considered a preliminary summary of the thousands of scientific articles on toxic effects of fluoride that have been published in many journals including *Fluoride*.

The evidence of fluoride sensitivity presented in Spittle’s book is persuasive, given the use of double blind challenges by several independent researchers working in different parts of the world. The onus is therefore on those who question this evidence to conduct large, controlled clinical studies, such as the investigation by Feltman and Kosel. The current weight of evidence is that fluoride sensitivity is real, affecting roughly 1% of all people exposed to a dose of 1 mg of fluoride ion/day or whose drinking water contains 1 mg/L of fluoride. *Fluoride Poisoning* should help turn up the heat on the debate.

REFERENCES

- 1 Spira L. The drama of fluorine: arch-enemy of mankind. Milwaukee, WI: Lee Foundation for Nutritional Research; 1953. Available online at: <http://www.soilandhealth.org/02/0201hyglibcat/0201hyglibcat.html>.
- 2 Feltman R. Prenatal and postnatal ingestion of fluorides: a progress report. *Dent Digest* 1956; 62:353-7.
- 3 Feltman R, Kosel G. Prenatal and postnatal ingestion of fluoride: fourteen years of investigation; final report. *J Dent Med* 1961;16:190-8.