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ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING ON FLUORIDATION OF WATER SUPPLIES

Present were: Dr. John Fertiga
Dr. Katherine Bain
Dr. John Caffey
Dr. Finn
Dr. Broad
Miss McCafferty
Dr. Harold Hodge
Mr. F.W. Gilcreas
Mr. C. Cox
Dr. E. Schlessinger
Dr. George James
Dr. David Ast
Dr. Overton

Date of Meeting--

Nov. 20th, 1950

The committee discussed two cities in New York -- Kingston and Newburgh. Newburgh has fluorine in its water and Kingston does not.

Dr. Ast opened the meeting with a discussion of the material he had furnished to the Committee.

The dental facilities for Newburgh and Kingston are the same. There are many more dentists since 1944 and the school program is much improved.

Children ages 6, 7, 9 and 11 were included in the study which started in 1944. 300 children in each age group in each city were examined. The question was raised as to whether or not the examiners had biased opinions. Dr. Ast answered this question by saying that the films were sent to Albany without any identifying data. They were counted and mixed. There were two examiners who did the work. The readers were given numbers at random. The same number of films were read by each examiner. There were four films on each patient. Approximately 30 sets were read each hour. Only the observable filled and decayed teeth were taken into consideration. We did not account for the missing teeth, as we do not know the reason the teeth were extracted. The comparison of conditions in the clinical and x-ray examinations were very close to further indicate no bias.

It was also brought out that there are many more cavities in the x-ray than the clinical examinations, but this is to be expected as an x-ray examination will detect cavities that a clinical examination will not find.

A question was raised as to whether the caries rate was decreasing in the United States generally. Dr. Ast stated that the controlled city (one which has fluorine in the water) is showing more improvement. This information is stated in "Public Health Report" dated Oct. 27th, 1950. The data for Wisconsin show an improvement in that State; also for Ontario.

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When examining the children in Newburgh there was no notable difference in the first twelve months of the study, but after that time many differences were shown. The caries rate decreased markedly over Kingston; also it was noted that the children's teeth were whiter and no brown spots appeared on the teeth.

Mr. Cox stated that fluorine could be added to the water in Kingston within two years at the most. He stated there should be local technical supervision to check on the water department. Dr. Finn also stated the same as Mr. Cox.

Dr. Hodge stated that this study will continue for ten years. It would take that number of years for permanent teeth to develop and grow.

It was brought out that fluoridated water definitely is not toxic. Dr. Schlessinger spoke of a study made at New York Hospital. This study included six children with normal kidney function and six children with kidney disorder. The normal children excreted half as much again of the fluorine as the children with kidney disorder. However, the fluoridated water was not harmful to either group.

Dr. Ast stated that the NYS Department of Health is willing to help a city fluoridate its water supplies if it wishes to have it done; providing it meets the NYS Department of Health standards.

Dr. Ast stated that there are several organizations that definitely endorse fluoridating water supplies. Among these are the United States Public Health Service, The Dental Territories Organization and the American Dental Association.

Dr. Caffey thought that it was a little too early to make any recommendations. Dr. Hodge answered by saying that the studies are more clear cut than a year ago. Dr. Ast thought we did not have the right to deprive children of the benefits of fluoridation if these findings were correct.

A question was raised as to whether New York City was interested in fluoridating its water. Dr. Ast mentioned that at a recent meeting of the New York Medical Society which he attended, Dr. Mahoney, NYC Department of Health Commissioner, was present and he showed a big interest in the discussions of fluoridating water.

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Dr. Ast stated that the continuing downward trend in the dental caries in the City of Newburgh would make it legitimate to fluoridate water.

Dr. Ast mentioned that Dr. Hilleboe would take action on the recommendations of this Committee.

It was brought out that we now have 73% of the original children from the study. 544 children were started in Newburgh. Now we have 397. We started with 507 in Kingston; now we have 386. It is expected that over a ten-year period we will have 50% of the original children.

Dr. Caffey, Dr. Schlessinger and Dr. Bain were recommended for a committee to present the results of the pediatric examinations.

It was agreed by all of the committee members that the statement of policy be as it stands today and that the committee meet at a suitable time when more data is available. In the meantime, Dr. Ast stated, if a community shows interest in fluoridating its water, they will have the benefit of such consultant services.

It was also agreed that the next meeting will be held when the new findings of the Newburgh study are available. That will be next June.

Dr. Broad mentioned that we should have a representative from the NYS Department of Health to come to the Dental Society meetings.

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