

This response was submitted to the consultation held by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics on *Public Health: ethical issues* between May and September 2006. The views expressed are solely those of the respondent(s) and not those of the Council.

Mrs Janet Brears

QUESTIONS ANSWERED:

Question 8 Supplementation of food and water

ANSWER:

Fluoridation of water is mass medication as it is a person treatment and not a water treatment and therefore should be resisted. We have a choice whether or not to buy fortified margarine and breakfast cereals, there are alternatives which are not fortified, but have to buy our water from the Water Company in our area. Perhaps one of the reasons behind international differences in the acceptance of fluoridation of water is that some will be better informed as to it being an abuse of human rights and will not find this acceptable. Another reason may be that some will be better informed as to the nature of 'fluoride' used in fluoridation, its contaminants (eg. arsenic, beryllium, lead, mercury, cadmium) and that it is not acceptable to fluoridate and therefore poison our water supplies. Individuals have the right to refuse medication and medical intervention and intervention or medication requires fully informed consent by the individual. I have not and will not give up my human right to refuse medication or medical intervention. No MP, counsellor, health service employee, member of the public has the right to decide what medication should be forced on others. Those who may want to take 'fluoride' or use 'fluoride' products are free to do so. These products can be obtained prescribed or bought in products where measured doses and amounts can be easily prescribed or bought. If fluoride is in the water supply then doses are unmeasured it is those who drink the most or dermally absorb the most who get the higher amount of fluoride. Where is your evidence that children benefit from fluoridation? The York review did not come to this conclusion, though some in favour of fluoridation have misinterpreted its findings in support of their claims. 48% of children in fluoridated areas have dental fluorosis, this is a symptom of systemic fluoride poisoning. (Hansard 20th April 1999. Baroness Hayman responding for the Government). So there is awareness that children are being poisoned and yet this is claimed by some to be a 'cosmetic' problem. The children who drink the most fluoridated water will probably suffer more adverse effects than the children who drink less healthy drinks. I do not think worth the risk of poisoning whole populations for the claim that children may have a filling less, especially when dental fluorosis can cause such problems for those it affects. I do not believe that water fluoridation protects the health of children. In the main, tooth decay is not life threatening, it is preventable. There is no proof that ingesting fluoride has any benefit to children's teeth. Some children and adults may have sensitivity to fluoride or may be more susceptible to its possible adverse effects. Elie Bassin found six times more osteosarcomas in young boys living in fluoridated areas and was awarded a PhD for this work. As Medications or medical interventions should only be given/carried out with the individuals fully informed consent, no doctor would be allowed to dose whole populations with unspecified unmeasured doses. It is not acceptable to administer a medication to me or my child in an attempt to prevent or lessen tooth decay in another child. Neither do I agree with folic acid being added to all flour. People should have the choice to be able to buy

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Question 9 Ethical issues

ANSWER:

Water fluoridation is mass medication and an abuse of our human right to be able to refuse medication. Parents should ensure that their child has a good diet, good oral hygiene routine and regular dental checks. If the parent wants their child to use fluoride then that is their choice. Parents should be able to have access to information which is balanced. Much of the information readily available to parents originates from the British Fluoridation Society via Public Health dental Consultants and advisors and their leaflets and in my opinion is unfairly biased in favour of fluoridation.