

VORSICHT FLUOR

Max Bruker,^a Rudolf Ziegelbecker

Reviewed by Jörg Spitz^b

The first author of this book is the late Dr Max Otto Bruker (b. Nov. 16, 1909; d. Jan. 6, 2001), a board certified physician in internal medicine, who was a renowned German nutritionist and director of hospitals specializing in naturopathic therapy and whole food based nutrition. During his life of almost 92 years he published 30 books with sales of more than 3 million copies. The second author, Rudolf Ziegelbecker (b. Aug. 26, 1924), an engineer and physicist, worked at the Institute for Environmental Research at the University of Graz, Austria, until he retired in January 1990. Since 1969 he has written and published extensively on statistical and epidemiological aspects of data concerning fluoride and tooth decay.

The first edition of *Vorsicht Fluor* was published in 1984 by Bioverlag Gesundleben. Dr Bruker was its sole author until later editions, starting in 1986, were published by Emu Verlag, of Lahnstein, with Ziegelbecker as a coauthor. The present 2005 seventh edition contains 480 pages and is divided into two parts. The first and larger part is written by Bruker; the second part, with contributions and correspondence from Ziegelbecker, rather limited in the first edition, grew with every further edition of the book.

From the start, Bruker sees tooth decay as a metabolic hard tissue disease caused by faulty nutrition, especially by refined carbohydrates, and not any lack of fluoride in drinking water or the diet. For him, tooth decay is only one symptom of generalized chronic degenerative diseases of the whole body like diabetes, obesity, myocardial infarction, arteriosclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis, etc. The only major difference is that tooth decay usually appears earlier in life before the other disorders do.

Bruker's arguments against the use of fluoride to prevent tooth decay are based on his views as a nutritionist:

- Fluoride is highly toxic;
- Valid scientific evidence for pro-fluoride anti-caries claims is lacking;
- The fluoride concept dangerously plays down the risks of sugar consumption;
- Belief in fluoride seduces people into a false reliance on poor nutrition.

After presenting a short history of water fluoridation, which began in North America in 1945 and was later promoted in Europe (with much less success), a large part of the book deals with the conflicting interests of official

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administrations, the sugar industry, and dental associations, both in Germany and the USA, to establish fluoridation as a routine measure. In Germany, the campaign culminated in the calculated destruction of the career of a German dentist who, while president of a local dental association, dared to advertise in various journals against sugar consumption, especially in schools.

As would be expected, considerable space is devoted in *Vorsicht Fluor* to arguments raised for and against fluoridation in Germany. In contrast to its rapid adoption in the USA, water fluoridation was resisted in Germany, at least in the former Federal Republic, and could not be initiated except for several years in the city of Kassel, where, after a time, just as in Basel, Switzerland, it was abandoned after dental results failed to meet what the promoters had promised. (In Basel, as in the rest of Switzerland, salt fluoridation has continued.)

In the different chapters there is a large collection of literature sources as well as references to names well known to the readers of *Fluoride*: Burgstahler, Colquhoun, Price, Waldbott, and Ziegelbecker, to mention only a few. Bruker ends his part of his book by emphasizing that tooth decay is due primarily to the consumption of sugar, i.e., it is fundamentally a nutritional-metabolic disease and that it is scientific nonsense to treat it with a chemical that is poisonous to the environment and to the cells and enzymes of the human body as well.

In the second part of the book Ziegelbecker reviews facts already presented by Bruker, but the discussion is more systematic and in greater depth. A large number of original papers are cited demonstrating that fluoride is toxic to the human body, is not an essential nutrient, and is unable to prevent tooth decay. In Ziegelbecker's view, water fluoridation is a misguided and mistaken preventive measure and he sees the same for the now propagated salt fluoridation. To his credit, Ziegelbecker as a specialist in statistical analysis has provided evidence of the erroneous basis of the pro-fluoride arguments of protagonists in Germany as well as in USA and elsewhere. He has even shown how some data indicate that water fluoridation can actually lead to a higher rate of tooth decay in the exposed children instead of a lower rate.

To summarize: Even though *Vorsicht Fluor* was first written more than 20 years ago, it is filled with valuable and important information about many aspects, especially from Germany and the USA, of the seemingly never ending problem of water fluoridation. Although various books on fluoridation are available in the Anglo-American literature, translation of this book by Bruker and Ziegelbecker into English would provide an excellent source of sound information and arguments against fluoridation in countries throughout the world.