

REPORT OF 15th SEMINAR OF THE JAPANESE SOCIETY FOR FLUORIDE RESEARCH, SENDAI, JAPAN, NOVEMBER 14, 1995

Kenji Akiniwa
Tokyo, Japan

Since the founding of the Japanese Society for Fluoride research by Professor Fumiyoshi Yanagisawa in 1981 (*Fluoride* 28 (1) 1-2 1995) the Society has arranged 15 seminars. The latest, held in Sendai, northern Japan, in November last year, was another successful function. The seminar was organized by Dr Hidetoshi Fuji of Sendai and was attended by over 50 researchers and health professionals from Japan and abroad. Many attending the seminar were school health workers, who had attended a meeting the previous day about the safety of the compulsory introduction into schools of fluoride mouth rinsing programs.

The seminar program comprised five presentations. The first was by Dr Kosei Takahashi (formerly of Tokyo University, and now retired): "Fluoride turning point after 50 years - little effect but serious damage." He discussed the fluoride-related increase in prevalence of osteosarcoma in teenage males, and critically analysed the attempt of Hoover and associates to dismiss the evidence. He discussed the evidence that fluoride is related to increases in Down's Syndrome, and presented evidence of that relationship from the records of three groups of young mothers. He also reviewed the recent evidence from Britain, USA and France that hip fractures in the aged are increased by low water fluoride intakes. He critically examined the WHO technical report of 1994 which recommended water fluoridation to a level between 0.5 and 1.0 mg/L (ppm). He pointed out that in many oriental cultures food contained fluoride in amounts which meant extra fluoride from drinking water was unnecessary and hazardous. He drew attention, also, to the dangers of fluoride gels and other topical uses of fluoride, especially for children under six years of age.

Dr K Chujou reported on successful reductions in tooth decay achieved without the use of fluoride in schools. He explained that education and nutrition were more effective procedures than administration of fluoride.

Dr N Hotta presented information on combined fluoride and arsenic pollution in areas of China. There were three main sources: drinking water, food (especially when dried in air), and air.

A government employee, Yoshikatsu Miki, reported on the fluoride mouth-rinsing program introduced in Niigata prefecture. The program had been virtually forced on schools by the local government. He seriously questioned its safety.

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Dr Akiniwa is the Editor of *Fluoride Research*, journal of the Japanese Society for Fluoride Research. Address: 〒194 3-9-22 Asahi machi, Machida City, Tokyo, Japan.

The final presentation was by the guest speaker, Dr John Colquhoun of New Zealand. His lecture was in two parts. First, he reviewed the new evidence of harm from water fluoridation, especially to the bones of the elderly resulting in increased hip fractures. In the second part Dr Colquhoun showed slides of examples of dental fluorosis in school children in Auckland, New Zealand, when the water was fluoridated to the level of 1 mg/L. In the discussion which followed, Dr Colquhoun explained that in New Zealand information on tooth decay was available for all children, and it did not support the claims made for water fluoridation, which depended upon statistical claims from small samples of children from selected areas.

There is increasing interest in the work of the Japanese Society for Fluoride Research, and further seminars are planned.