

50th Anniversary Conference on Salt Fluoridation Zurich, 17th October 2005

M A Lennon¹ and Sheila Jones²

¹Chariman; ²Research and Information Officer, British Fluoridation Society, Department of Oral Health and Development, School of Clinical Dentistry, University of Sheffield

This conference, to celebrate 50 years of salt fluoridation in Switzerland, was organised by the Department of Preventive Dentistry, Periodontology and Cariology of the University of Zurich. Delegates were welcomed by Professor Thomas Imfeld who acknowledged the substantial contributions of his colleagues Professor Hans Mühleemann and Thomas Marthaler to the development and evaluation of salt fluoridation. The scientific papers presented at the conference had already been peer reviewed and edited by Jürg Meyer (Basel) and Thomas Marthaler (Zurich) and published, in English, in *Schweizer Monatsschrift für Zahnmedizin* Vol 115 (Nr. 8 + 9) 2005. We understand that bound copies are available from the University Department as long as stocks last (sekretariat.ppk@zzmk.unizh.ch).

The first paper outlined the use of salt as a carrier of iodine in iodine-deficient areas (Bürgi and Zimmermann 2005). Bürgi and Zimmerman, made the important point that the two aims: of preventing hypertension through restricting salt intake, and eliminating iodine deficiency through iodized salt, are not in conflict. This is because it would be easy to compensate for a reduction salt intake in the population by increasing the concentration of iodine in salt. Similar arguments of course could be made in respect of the salt fluoride content.

The next three papers outlined the history of salt

fluoridation in Switzerland (Marthaler 2005a), France (Tramini 2005) and Germany (Schulte 2005), while the fifth paper outlined the development of salt fluoridation in the Americas (Gillespie and Baez 2005). Worldwide around 160 million people now consume fluoridated salt.

Papers on fluoride metabolism when added to salt, and monitoring fluoride exposure through fingernail clipping and urinary excretion studies were presented by Whitford, Marthaler and Schulte (Whitford 2005a; Marthaler and Schulte 2005; Whitford 2005b). Issues around costs, quality control, dental fluorosis, public health aspects, and health promotion were also covered in detail (Gillespie and Marthaler 2005; Trachsel 2005; Menghini 2005; Marthaler 2005b; Magri 2005). In a key paper tabled and presented at the conference (but unfortunately not included in the bound copies), Franz Götzfried covered the important and topical issue of the legal aspects of fluoride in salt, particularly within the EU (Götzfried, 2006b).

As you would expect this was an extremely well organised conference and these published conference proceedings with excellent bibliographies are an obvious starting point for any reader wishing to come up to date on this important public health measure.

M A Lennon and Sheila Jones

References

- Bürgi, H. and M. B. Zimmermann (2005): Salt as a carrier of iodine in iodine deficient areas. *Schweiz Monatsschr Zahnmed* **115**: 648-50.
- Gillespie, G. M. and R. Baez (2005). Development of salt fluoridation in the Americas. *Schweiz Monatsschr Zahnmed* **115**: 663-9.
- Gillespie, G. M. and T. M. Marthaler (2005). Cost aspects of salt fluoridation. *Schweiz Monatsschr Zahnmed* **115**: 778-84.
- Götzfried, F (2006a) In press: Production of fluoridated salt *Schweiz Monatsschr Zahnmed* **116**
- Götzfried, F (2006b) In press: Legal aspects of fluoride in salt, particularly within the EU. *Schweiz Monatsschr Zahnmed* **116**
- Magri, F. (2005). Interaction between salt fluoridation and comprehensive oral health promotion. *Schweiz Monatsschr Zahnmed* **115**: 774-7.
- Marthaler, T. M. (2005a). Overview of salt fluoridation in Switzerland since 1955, a short history. *Schweiz Monatsschr Zahnmed* **115**: 651-5.
- Marthaler, T. M. (2005b). Increasing the public health effectiveness of fluoridated salt. *Schweiz Monatsschr Zahnmed* **115**: 785-92.
- Marthaler, T. M. and A. G. Schulte (2005). Monitoring salt fluoridation programs through urinary excretion studies. *Schweiz Monatsschr Zahnmed* **115**: 679-84.
- Menghini, G. (2005). Dental fluorosis in salt fluoridation schemes. *Schweiz Monatsschr Zahnmed* **115**: 1026-30.
- Schulte, A. G. (2005). Salt fluoridation in Germany since 1991. *Schweiz Monatsschr Zahnmed* **115**: 659-62.
- Trachsel, S. (2005). Quality control in the production of fluoridated food grade salt. *Schweiz Monatsschr Zahnmed* **115**: 770-3.
- Tramini, P. (2005). Salt fluoridation in France since 1986. *Schweiz Monatsschr Zahnmed* **115**: 656-8.
- Whitford, G. M. (2005a). Fluoride metabolism when added to salt. *Schweiz Monatsschr Zahnmed* **115**: 675-8.
- Whitford, G. M. (2005b). Monitoring fluoride exposure with fingernail clippings. *Schweiz Monatsschr Zahnmed* **115**: 685-9.