Editorial comment

Roll out the evidence

Leader of Hampshire County Council, Ken Thornber has admitted that he has doubts on whether drinking fluoridated water is safe. He also raises the subject of fluorosis. Why, he asked, should children with otherwise healthy teeth be at risk of developing some fluorosis for the sake of just a few others who may benefit? He does have a point. For while there is plenty of evidence that fluoridation keeps decay, fillings and extractions at bay, nobody seems that keen to roll out much evidence on the safety and efficacy of fluoridation. This was the very question Dental Tribune put forward to Dr Barry Cockcroft only recently, and he remains passionately confident on the issue. Indeed, the other day he even pulled out information related to a recent study by The York Review looked at 700 papers and there was not one link between fluoridation and general health issues - there really is no evidence that any damage is done and that is a fact. And on fluorosis he is equally as vehement.

UK remains at war. But it isn't just the stark division that is so surprising here - more the raw and rage-fuelled emotion that comes with it. If fluoridation is as safe as Dr Cockcroft suggests, why are anti-fluoridation groups arguing otherwise? Surely there is only one solution to this non-stop conundrum - and that is we have to have more concrete evidence. In the meantime, what's wrong with rolling out a massive campaign on the benefits of brushing children's teeth with fluoride? You only have to look at the Government's efforts on smoking cessation to see the impact it could make. Images of rotten teeth, extractions and children under general anaesthetic - though shocking - would get the results the profession is looking for. It would probably cost a lot less too.

Impossible NHS access

Forking out for expensively equipped, empty dental rooms is ludicrous. So what does this say about NHS dentistry? While it is great that a PCT in Cornwall is providing fantastic dental facilities, what is the point when there are no NHS dentists to fill them? A dentist told Dental Tribune last week that under the new contract he gets paid the same amount of money for doing either one filling or ten fillings. 'There is just no incentive to work in NHS dentistry any longer,' he said. Point taken...

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