

NHMRC fluoride paper: relax, Australian citizens, your pineal glands are safe

Written by Michael Vagg, Clinical Senior Lecturer at Deakin University School of Medicine & Pain Specialist, Deakin University

When not being forced to waste their time and formidable expertise researching furchies like [wind turbine syndrome](#) or homeopathy, the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) can get on with producing exemplary public health statements like [their newest one on water fluoridation](#)

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Begun in 2014 in response to [this sort of conspiracy-mongering](#), the NHMRC has collected an overwhelming weight of evidence in support of the safety and benefit of adding tiny amounts of fluoride to drinking water supplies.

This document is a draft released for public comment. I would love to be able to read the public submissions they are going to get. None of the favoured conspiracy claims are supported.

It most emphatically did not find any evidence that fluoride lowers IQ, as suggested by a [badly done and even more badly reported paper from 2012](#)

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Neither did it find any support for the idea that fluoride at levels obtained by current fluoridation practices caused significant dental fluorosis, such as brittle or discoloured teeth from excessive fluoride being incorporated into teeth.

Still less was there any support for fluoride acting as a [mind control agent](#) !

The draft paper sets out in excellent prose the value of its work and how it has been done. It is easy to understand and reading through it, I was struck by how well the considerable scientific grunt work had been made to sound easy and logical. In particular, the couple of pages the authors have devoted to their methodology is outstandingly clear and easily understood.

Sections are also included on the ethics and cost-effectiveness of water fluoridation, distilled

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into useful factoids such as:

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For every A\$1 spent on fluoridation, A\$7-18 is saved in dental treatment costs

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Over the last 25 years in Victoria, around A\$1 billion dollars has been saved in treatment costs and reduced absenteeism

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Stopping water fluoridation would increase health inequality in the nation as a whole.

I would recommend the NHMRC fluoride paper as a public document for anyone with an interest in the issue, or indeed as a basic study of how to do public health policy. Most people I suspect will just go about their lives secure in the knowledge that sensible, reasonable public health professionals are making good decisions in the national interest.

Or at least, that's what we would be thinking given that we are apparently docile and obedient from all the [fluoride accumulating in our pineal glands…](#)

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Read more <http://theconversation.com/nhmrc-fluoride-paper-relax-australian-citizens-your-pineal-glands-are-safe-65342>