

Tooth Traitors

diagnosis. Finally a team of physicians was assigned to the problem, and worked for 11 months to identify the cause.

The cause was eventually identified as mercury poisoning, and resulted in a search for the source which was traced to the leakage of mercury from a manufacturing plant into Minimata Bay. The disaster was called Minimata Disease, and is classically considered as the worst case of mercury poisoning in history. Now if took a Team of Doctors 11 months to diagnose Hundreds of People with Disabling Symptoms and dozens of resulting birth defects from pregnancies from around the time of the disaster, what chance does the average person have of being diagnosed with Mercury Poisoning: The answer, of course, is Zero, as confirmed in Goodman and Gilman.

The change in psychosomatic illness, moving from paralysis to fatigue, is easily explained if one considers that when amalgam compounds became more stable, mercury vapor and corrosion was greatly reduced in the late 19th century. Severe mercury poisoning has paralysis as one of its main symptoms. Micro-mercury poisoning has fatigue as one of its main symptoms. The roaches of the world are happy that we are not testing this more, if not anyone else.

On behalf of the people of world still suffering from wrongly-diagnosed psychosomatic disorders , I desire to update the meaning of quack for the 1990s. I propose that the emblem of the American Dental Association be changed toDonald Duck!

Chapter -6-

It's Not Gonna Cause A Problem

The following is a transcript from CBS Television. 60 Minutes did an expose on the amalgam controversy in 1990. The conclusions that can be drawn from this work are: the lawyers have taken over within the American Dental Association (witness their denials of any negative amalgam studies), and the wagons have circled to force anti-amalgamists to “prove” that mercury fillings cause illness and disease. However, as Dr. Zamm points out in the interview, as consumers we have to protect ourselves, since a poison is a poison, and nothing with a question should be put in our bodies.

The ADA representative, Dr. Simmons from Alabama, has such an easygoing drawl that he gets the credit for the title of this chapter (from a statement made by him). For after

An on-line publication authored by Ernie Mezei B.Sc., Eng.

Tooth Traitors

all, he implores us to trust him, as he is not on a witch-hunt to expel anti-amalgam dentists from the profession. He is just trying to uphold the scientific standards upon which dentistry is based; a completely hilarious statement for readers of this book given the true history and facts we have discussed at length regarding Dental Non-Science and Non-Ethics.

Non-Science: If amalgam had not been invented, dentists would have been forced to use gold fillings for the last 100 years. Gold would have limited the expansion of dentistry. How many parents in families making \$20,000 to \$60,000 per year walk around with pure gold, enough to fill a family of four's teeth, on their person? The answer, of course, is zero. Maybe the public hold some blame for amalgam's widespread use because of low cost. Maybe, but then we were never told about the side-effects.

Non-Ethics: When scientists introduce any new technology, there are side-effects. But then how many of these technologies are implanted in the general population? Only one, amalgam. Whenever there is a question of ethics, one asks the obvious: who benefits? Have you looked at the ADA's income statement lately?

There are numerous examples included of very sick patients cured by having their fillings removed. Called "anecdotal" evidence by dentists, the clinicians who are astounded by these recoveries are challenging the dentists, by asking whether a D.D.S. ever does a real medical exam of a patient.

This transcript is disturbing, not in the least because few individuals have the resources of 60 minutes to open doors and get answers to questions about something as complex as the amalgam issue. It is clear that Morley Safer, the host of this segment, feels for the patients who have recovered, and questions the American Dental Association's motives and protectors (ie the Food and Drug Administration) who are more interested in covering their legal positions rather than taking the lead in helping the many sufferers of amalgam poisoning.

60 Minutes, Originally Aired December 16, 1990

Is there poison in your mouth?

Produced by Patti Hassler

Hosted by Morely Safer

Safer:

"This is the kind of story we approach with some caution. The question is: "Is there poison in your mouth?". The American Dental Association says there isn't. But some of

An on-line publication authored by Ernie Mezei B.Sc., Eng.

Tooth Traitors

its members say there is, and have stopped using it. “It” is a filling, a silver amalgam filling, the dentists’ filling of choice for more than a century.

More than a hundred million of them were put into American mouths last year. What you probably don’t know is that these so-called silver fillings are 50% mercury, and mercury is more poisonous than lead or even arsenic. Because it’s been around so long, and because it was assumed that the mercury was made stable when mixed with other metals, amalgam fillings were never tested for safety. One of those remedies that the Food and Drug Administration automatically approved.

But now a growing number of scientists, doctors, and dentists are saying that silver amalgams should be banned.”

(Cut to Dentist’s Office)

Dentist:

“Open wide.”

Safer: “Last summer the EPA banned mercury from indoor latex paint because of mercury vapor. The vapor level in this patient’s mouth after chewing for 10 minutes is 92 times higher than the mercury vapor level in a newly painted room. Three times higher than the U.S. government allows in the workplace.

(Cut to Close-up)

This is a silver amalgam filling. It is made of silver, copper, tin, and zinc, and....mercury. Half of it is mercury. No specific disease has yet been directly linked to mercury from fillings, but now a number of medical schools are looking at the relationship between mercury vapor in the mouth and a whole variety of diseases: Alzheimers, Arthritis and Colitis, have all been linked to mercury poisoning.

Mercury in the workplace has produced kidney damage, brain damage, birth defects, and symptoms of multiple sclerosis.”

(Cut to Dr. Vimy Interview)

Vimy:

“There is no safe threshold for mercury exposure. None! And there isn’t someone, somewhere, who may not have a very violent reaction even to the lowest amounts of mercury.”

Tooth Traitors

Safer:

“Dr. Murray Vimy is a scientific consultant to the World Health Organization’s Committee on Mercury in the Environment. He’s a researcher at the University of Calgary Medical School, and he’s a dentist. He got rid of mercury in his own practice 8 years ago, when he learned that mercury vapor routinely escapes from amalgam fillings.”

Vimy:

“When I measured mercury coming off of fillings, that was reasonable doubt in my mind. It was enough reasonable doubt that I made a clinical decision for my patients to stop using it.”

(Cut to Dr. Heber Simmons ADA Interview)

Simmons:

“You will get some mercury vapor, there’s no doubt about that.”

Safer:

“Dr. Heber Simmons speaks for the American Dental Association. Even though more and more American dentists have serious doubts about amalgam, the ADA, which sets standards and approves products, says it is perfectly safe. Up until 7 years ago, the ADA said no vapor at all was released from fillings.”

Simmons:

“But the amounts that we are seeing are far below any levels that could cause a problem, and the levels we are seeing are simply not clinically significant.”

Safer:

“So you concede that there is a constant release of mercury vapor?”

Simmons

“Oh we, we don’t dispute that at all. But, but the amount that is being release when you chew, is such of a small amount, and a miniscule amount, that it is not gonna cause a problem.”

(Cut to Dr. Murray Vimy)

Tooth Traitors

Vimy:

“This issue is, chronic exposure - low dose, to a heavy metal. And our laboratory is the entire human population in the Western World who has had amalgams. And no one has ever really looked at that aspect of mercury exposure. A great deal is known about acute exposures: One time, two time, large exposures. But this is something that people have day after day after day. And we’re just at the beginning of that trail of investigations.

(Cut to Fay Doris Interview)

Fay Doris:

“Dr Vimy took a mercury test of the mercury vapor in my mouth, and at that point it was the highest of anybody he’d tested. I had ten teeth with massive mercury fillings in them, and uh, as he said at the time, if I was a building I would have been condemned (laugh), the reading was so high!

Safer:

“Fay Doris and her husband are patients of Dr. Vimy. She was crippled by arthritis, suffered from fatigue, colitis, and memory loss. Her doctor told her back in 1985 at the age of 35 that within 6 months she’d be confined to a wheelchair. After reading about a connection between mercury and arthritis, Dave Doris talked to Dr. Vimy about removing his wife’s fillings.

Dave Doris:

“And I said, go ahead and do it, what have we got to lose. The prognosis is she’s going to be in a wheelchair by Christmas for the rest of her life, which was scary for me.”

Fay Doris:

“I was mercury free by, I think by the 21st of August of that year, and 3, within 3 weeks later I didn’t have to use a cane, and all my symptoms started going away. I had more energy, my tremor stopped in my hands, I could do things again it was just marvelous.

Dave Doris:

“And noticeably the swelling in the joints of her hands, uh, started to go down, but the biggest thing was , it wasn’t painful on her feet to walk.

Safer:

Tooth Traitors

“And have, have, have any of those symptoms returned?”

Fay Doris:

“On the whole, I’d say 95% of it is gone away.”

(Cut to Dr. Murray Vimy)

Vimy: “That’s clinical evidence. That’s not scientific evidence, but clinical evidence is where science has to start. Science starts with observation.”

Safer:

“The kind of evidence Dr. Vimy is talking about is what scientists call anecdotal. Reports of recoveries that have not been monitored under strict laboratory conditions. There are thousands of anecdotal stories, all over Europe and the United States. This group in Illinois reported relief from symptoms of manic depression, chronic fatigue, and migraine headaches; from multiple sclerosis and anemia.”

(Cut to Nancy Yost interview)

Safer:

“Last May, Nancy Yost, from San Jose, was told by her doctors that she had multiple sclerosis. It was confirmed by Magnetic Resonance Imaging, an MRI scan, incurable. She’d worked in the dental industry, and heard reports that some patients showed improvement after having amalgam fillings removed.

Yost:

“And I was cautioned by the doctors always: You’ve got your hopes too high, get real here (laugh). If you are better its going to be a long period.”

Safer:

“Ohhhh”

“As a last resort, she had her 5 amalgam fillings taken out. She left the dentist’s office using a cane and leaning heavily on the arm of a friend.”

Yost

Tooth Traitors

“The next morning, when I presented to my physician, I threw my cane at him, and said look!”

Safer:

“It was that quick?”

Yost:

“It was that quick.”

Safer:

“What did your doctor say?”

Yost:

“Well, he was incredulous. He knew it would be a benefit, but no one expected it would be instantaneous! Or so dramatic. My voice came back, my ability to walk and hold a pencil came back. It was there! That night, I ended up going to dinner in San Francisco and actually dancing 2 dances. And I hadn’t been walking since May (laugh)!”

Safer:

“Next day.”

Yost:

“Friday evening, the next day.”

Safer

“Are there any lingering effects?”

Yost:

“Yes.....yes. There are lingering effects if I get overtired, or cold, or under a great deal of stress.”

(Cut to Dr. Heber Simmons, ADA)

Simmons:

Tooth Traitors

“The National Multiple Sclerosis Society states that this is a cruel hoax on these people, to take the fillings out in hopes that its gonna cure the MS, and it does not happen in those cases, it simply does not happen.

Yost:

“I think it’s a rather strange position to take, because according to all the doctors I talked to, they said Multiple Sclerosis has no....no known cause, and there is no known cure. Well if we don’t know what causes it, why not look at possibilities. Might it be.....mercury poisoning? They have no better answer!”

Safer:

“There’s no suggestion that all MS patients will recover if their fillings are removed. But there are enough recoveries or partial recoveries to raise questions. There are alternatives to amalgams. Composites like Dr. Vimy’s placing in this patient’s mouth. Porcelain and gold. They’re all more expensive than amalgam, and except for gold, not as durable. Amalgams are also easier for dentists to use.

While the ADA publicly advocates the safety of amalgam, it cautions dentists to use a no-touch technique when handling the material, and to store the scrap, the leftovers that have not gone into a patient’s mouth, under liquid in a tightly closed container.”

(Cut to Dr. Heber Simmons, ADA)

Safer:

“If it’s so volatile, so dangerous in a dentist’s hands, how on earth can it be safe in our mouths?”

Simmons:

“Morely, you’ve got to understand, uh, how amalgam really works. If it’s in a free form, the mercury that is in amalgam is dangerous. But it, when it forms with the copper, the tin, the zinc, and the silver that, that make up the amalgam filling, it becomes a stable compound at that time. Once it is mixed and placed in a patient’s mouth, it is a stable compound and it is not does not constitute a risk.

Safer:

“Once it hardens.....”

Simmons:

Tooth Traitors

“Correct”

Safer:

“It’s safe”

Simmons:

“Right”

Safer:

“What do you do with your scrap amalgam?”

Simmons:

“What we do in our own practice, is we keep it in a jar, that has glycerine in the jar, we pull the scrap in there put a top on it, so it is not exposed in any way. It’s in an airtight jar all the time.”

Safer:

“Why, given that.....?”

Simmons:

“That is the recommended way of taking care of it in a dental office. That is what’s been recommended by the scientists so that’s the way we do it.”

Safer:

“But if its so perfectly safe in this combined state.....”

Simmons:

“But Morely, you’ve got to understand when we, uh, when we’re saving this stuff, we, we’ve got a big jar of it. You’ve got to realize I’m in that office 5 days a week, with this material. I do not want to go in there with an open container like that. I want to be as safe as I can.

(Cut to Dr. Joel Berger interview)

Safer:

Tooth Traitors

“The ADA is adamant that mercury in a patient’s mouth is safe. So adamant that in 1986 it changed its code of ethics. It became a violation of that code for any dentist to recommend the removal of amalgam because of mercury. Almost immediately Dr. Joel Berger, a visible and vocal anti-amalgam dentist, was charged with fraud by the New York State dental authorities. The ADA provided an expert witness to testify against him. His license was revoked.”

Berger:

“I never told a patient that they would get healthier or better. I told them that we could remove a known risk, a poison, a toxin, a carcinogen, from their bodies if they eliminate the source of mercury from their mouths. It was their risk decision to do it or not to do it.”

Vimy:

“Dr. Joel Berger should never have lost his, uh, dental license. He was a very conservative dentist. You couldn’t even consider him a fringe dentist.”

Safer:

“Dr. Vimy testified as a scientific expert for Joel Berger. He says the change in the code of ethics has had a profound effect.”

Vimy:

“The effect has been that it’s really, in the United States, taken away the constitutional rights of dentists and the rights of patients. They have, they no longer have freedom of choice, and they no longer have freedom of expression. A dentist can no longer say that he is against dental amalgam, so it’s a fear tactic, it’s a witch hunt.

(Cut to Dr. Simmons, ADA)

Simmons:

“But I can tell you that we are not on a witch hunt. That I personally am not. That’s a personal choice that the dentist has to make.”

Safer:

“Why did you change the code of ethics regarding amalgams.”

Simmons:

Tooth Traitors

“Because it has not been proven that taking amalgams out will help any of these conditions. And there were people that were taking amalgams out, saying that that was gonna help MS and other conditions. It has never been scientifically proven that this will happen.

(Cut to Dr. Murray Vimy)

Safer: “What’s the position of the Canadian Dental Association?”

Vimy:

“Exactly the same. The Americans sneeze, the Canadians bring their Kleenex. So they have changed their code of ethics too.”

(Cut to Dr. Simmons)

Safer:

“How do you account for those people who have, whose health has improved after the removal of amalgam fillings?”

Simmons:

“I would have to say that it was, it was anecdotal. I’m delighted that the people are better.”

(Cut to Dr. Alfred Zamm interview)

Zamm:

“The word anecdote doesn’t mean it’s not true. It means it’s an observed clinical observation by a clinician, and that’s my job. I’m a clinician. And I saw the patient got better, what am I supposed to do, report that he didn’t get better?”

Safer:

“Dr. Alfred Zamm is an allergist and dermatologist in Kingston, New York. He’s reported that hundreds of his patients have recovered from a variety of diseases after having fillings removed. He’s in the process of filing those cases with the Food and Drug Administration. One case, a 32 year old woman who was crippled by arthritis.”

Zamm:

Tooth Traitors

“And I had her seen by a board certified rheumatologist, whose really a good physician, he really knows what he’s doing. And he said ‘there’s a limit to what I can do’ and he gave her some anti-inflammatory drugs and aspirin, and so forth.”

Safer:

“Dr. Zamm arranged for her fillings to be removed. Within a month, she was no longer on crutches.”

Zamm:

“The rheumatologist was astounded. Not only was her arthritis better, but you could see she looked like a different person. She was healthy. She no longer was poisoned.”

(Cut to Dr. Simmons, ADA)

Safer:

“Do you totally dismiss the anecdotal evidence?”

Simmons:

“No, I do not totally dismiss it. But I just say on the basis of the facts that we have today, they’re insignificant. They’re clinically insignificant.”

Zamm:

“How could they know that? Do they examine the patient 3 or 6 months later? How many dentists have done a rectal on you, just to be ridiculous. They don’t know anything about you!”

Simmons:

“You’ve got to remember, we’re, we’re looking at, at, really a long time use. You know there have only been 50 cases reported in the literature of amalgam allergy, of true allergy to amalgam in the last 85 years.”

Zamm:

“That’s an obfuscating statement. They use the word allergic. It’s not allergy, it’s poisoning of critical immune processes. If someone dies of cancer, and you ask the specialist ‘why does he have cancer?’, he says ‘I don’t know’. If someone dies of heart disease, ‘why did this one get heart disease and the other one didn’t’, ‘I don’t know.’”

Tooth Traitors

There's a lot of things we don't know. But I do know that it's not safe to put something in somebody's mouth that has a question."

Safer:

"Dr. Zamm has charted symptoms of diseases, patients who've had fillings removed, and the results. He points to Joe Seveski as a prime example. For years, he suffered with allergies to certain foods. Then 5 years ago, he began getting serious infections. It went on for 4 years.

Zamm:

"I sent him to a board-certified internist who was a specialist in blood disease who could find nothing. "

Safer:

"Finally Dr. Zamm had Joe's fillings removed. Within a month the infections were gone."

Zamm:

"His unexplained rashes of 20 years had disappeared. Now he can eat foods that he couldn't eat before. His immune system is working again."

Safer:

"Nothing wrong with his blood?"

Zamm:

"Board-certified specialist, could not find a thing."

Safer:

"No other change in his environment that could account for this?"

Zamm:

"Zero, no change whatsoever. We're just arguing here, or discussing, whether a poison is a poison. It's a bizarre conversation, you know, when you think about it. To try to justify if a poison is a poison."

Tooth Traitors

Safer:

“If the mercury in amalgam fillings is as poisonous as you say it is, why hasn’t the medical community jumped on it and banned it.?”

Zamm:

“Goodman and Gilman is the Bible of Pharmacology. When you go to medical school, you use Goodman and Gilman.”

Safer:

“According to Goodman and Gilman, there have been epidemics of mercury poisoning that were misdiagnosed for years. The reason for the tragic delays, says this textbook, include vagueness of early clinical signs and the medical profession’s unfamiliarity with the disease.”

Zamm:

“It says clearly: ‘doctors very rarely make a diagnosis of mercury poisoning because of the difficultness of it.’ It comes in different phases: one has headaches, one has tiredness, one has this, one has that. It’s a very difficult diagnosis to make, especially when it’s micro-mercurialism. Very small amounts. That’s why you don’t have a lot of doctors jumping in. But they will!”

(Cut to Calgary Medical School operating rooms)

Safer:

“The first full-scale investigation into the effects of amalgam on general health is taking place in Calgary. Dr. Vimy and Dr. Fritz Lorscheider, the Chief of Physiology at the medical school, and a team of other scientists began with sheep. They found that mercury from the fillings travelled throughout the body, and in pregnant sheep into the fetus.

The ADA says the Sheep Studies are seriously flawed. The World Health Organization says the results are valid, and so do a number of scientific journals. But the research that was most compelling was presented to the American Physiological Society in Orlando last October. It showed that on average, all six sheep used in the experiment lost half their kidney function within 30 days of receiving fillings.

When they moved on to monkeys, a much closer relative of man, Vimy and Lorscheider found the same concentrations of mercury had occurred. They also found that the mercury

Tooth Traitors

had a bacteriological effect on monkeys. It attacked their immune system. The kidney and bacteriological studies are now being reviewed by the scientific community.

In all the experiments, Dr. Vimy used the same amalgam used in dentist's offices. The amount was determined by the animal's body weight. The preliminary result of human experiments showed no radical differences between humans and animals. Drs. Vimy and Lorscheider have joined a growing number of dentists, doctors, and scientists calling for a total ban on amalgam. In this country, a ban would have to be imposed by the Food and Drug Administration.

(Cut to outside shot of FDA offices in Washington)

So what about the FDA, what does it have to say about silver fillings? Well, it refuses to be interviewed. Suprising, given the widespread use of the product, and the confidence that Americans, indeed most of the world has, in both its caution and its expertise. The FDA did send us a brief statement, that says: 'The Canadian Sheep Study raises some preliminary questions about the safety of dental amalgams, but leaves important questions unanswered. The FDA remains confident in the value of amalgams in dental care.' It says it could ban them, but it won't do that until it is satisfied there is a health risk."

(Cut to Dr. Murray Vimy interview)

Safer:

"Why has the FDA been so slow?"

Vimy:

"That's interesting, because what you see when you look into the FDA, you see that the FDA's dental division has been platooned full of American Dental Association people. The entire committee is made up of people from dental institutions, practicing dentists, and people from the dental industry who make the dental materials. There's virtually no medical input, or basic science input from medicine, on that committee. And so anything the ADA wants they pretty much can get through the FDA. That's what's called effective lobbying."

(Cut to Dr. Simmons)

Simmons:

"The dental trade industry, the American Dental Association, and the dentists of this country; their primary interest is doing what is best for that patient. And to making sure it

Tooth Traitors

is safe and effective and it does the job at hand. You got to remember, Morely, I work with this material every single day. I still place it in patients teeth. I'm a pediatric dentist in Jackson, Mississippi.

Safer:

“Do you have any scientific evidence that it is safe?”

Simmons:

“Absolutely, there are numerous studies that have been done.”

(Cut to off-camera scientist)

Safer:

“But the ADA's top scientist, who was present at the interview, says the effects of mercury vapor on health have not yet been well researched. There is barely a scientist who would disagree.”

(Cut to Louise Hurbeck interview)

Safer:

“Louise Hurbeck was disabled and in acute pain for 9 years. Her doctor had diagnosed multiple sclerosis. She had her fillings removed after seeing a report on amalgam on the CBS Evening News. Within 6 months, almost all her symptoms were gone. Her doctor says the most likely explanation was spontaneous remission.”

Hurbeck:

“I wasn't just sitting here, when one day oh suddenly it was all gone. I did something specific that made it happen. And that is by removing the mercury from my teeth.”

Safer:

“Louise has become an activist on the amalgam issue. She wants the law changed.”

Hurbeck:

“I think dentists should be made to tell the people what they're putting in our mouth. If you get a prescription drug now from a doctor, you have the right to know what that drug is, and what its side-effects are.

Tooth Traitors

Safer:

“That right to know is called informed consent. But the ADA is fighting it, urging state dental associations to fight any legislation to make dentists explain the possible risks.”

(Cut to Dr. Simmons, ADA)

Simmons

“If there’s no risk involved, why do you have to have informed consent? We do not mind talking about it at all, we’re delighted to talk about it. We’re fully open....”

Safer:

“But don’t volunteer it, that’s what you’re telling your people.

Simmons:

“Oh, no I’m not volunteering it. I mean, I not saying that, I did not say that at all. You put words in my mouth.

Safer:

“You tell people about this controversy about amalgam?”

Simmons:

“If they ask, I will tell them (Safer laughs), I do not go out and volunteer. Absolutely right, because in my opinion there is no risk involved with it.”

Safer:

“What I don’t understand, though, is why you’re so tough on dentists who might say: ‘You know, I’m not comfortable with this mercury stuff.’ You cut him off at the knees if he even suggests it.”

Simmons:

“No we don’t. We just say that its not backed up by sound, scientific evidence.”

Safer:

“And you regard it as unethical behaviour.”

Tooth Traitors

Simmons:

“Absolutely. Absolutely.”

Safer:

“So that’s called cutting him off at the knees.”

Simmons:

“No, not in my terminology it’s not. You may think it is, but its not. Morely, I want to say.....”

Safer:

“You spread the word that your local dentist is unethical, how many people are going to go to him.”

Simmons:

“I can’t answer that question. I have no answer for that.”

Safer:

“But you know the answer.”

Simmons:

“But I can say this, I look upon it as us trying to uphold the scientific standards on which this profession is based.

(Cut to Dr. Murray Vimy interview)

Vimy:

“If you took amalgam off the market tomorrow, a good 40% of American Dentists who belong to the American Dental Associations would have to be retrained. Because in their practices, the prime thing that they use is dental amalgam.

(Cut to Dr. Zamm interview)

Zamm:

Tooth Traitors

“As consumers, Morely, we have to protect ourselves. We can’t wait until the last I is dotted and the last T is crossed. The evidence is here. And we should say, if it’s not reasonably safe, if there’s a question, I’m not going to put it in my child’s mouth.

Safer:

“So what are you saying to the rest of us? Go out and have your fillings removed, is that what you’re saying?”

Zamm:

“(Smiles) Absolutely. Absolutely.”

(Cut to Safer’s closing comments)

Safer:

“Not everyone involved in the call for a ban on amalgam feels Dr. Zamm’s sense of urgency. Dentists who’ve stopped using amalgam suggest careful consultation before having any fillings removed. Some of them, still members of the American Dental Association, have filed a class-action suit against their own organization, charging it has fraudulently misrepresented the amalgam issue to its members. It’s been suggested that if the ADA did concede there were risks, dentists might be sued by their patients.

The FDA will review the safety of amalgam fillings in March. Just last month in Sweden, the government passed a law allowing its citizens to have amalgam fillings removed under the national dental plan. And in Germany, legislation to ban amalgam has been introduced. A total ban is expected within the year.

(c) 1990 CBS INC. All rights reserved

Author's Update. The United States Army Dental Investigation Service (DIS) has declared amalgam to be Toxic Waste and all U.S. Army Dentists must dispose of it as such. This information is published on the DIS Website for all to see at <http://www.brooks.af.mil/DIS/HOT/scrap.htm>. Here is the webpage:

UPDATE ON AMALGAM SCRAP

Recent analytical tests performed by DIS and others have indicated that scrap dental amalgam meets the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) definition of a hazardous waste. The test used is called a Toxicity Characteristic Leaching Procedure (TCLP) and is