

Water fluoride levels do not increase risk of bone cancer

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(Medical Xpress)—Fluoride levels in drinking water do not lead to a greater risk of primary bone cancer, a new study has found.

Researchers at Newcastle University found that [higher levels](#) of natural or artificial [fluoride](#) in drinking water in the UK had no impact on the incidence of either osteosarcoma or Ewing's sarcoma in people aged 0-49.

The study, funded by charity Bone Cancer Research Trust (BCRT), analysed 2,566 osteosarcoma and 1,650 Ewing's sarcoma cases during 1980 and 2005.

Artificial fluoridation of drinking water to improve dental health has long been a controversial topic, with opponents citing a possible link with increased risk of primary [bone cancer](#).

Fluoride in drinking water

Dr Richard McNally of the Institute of Health & Society at Newcastle University, who led the study, said: "This is the largest study that has ever been conducted examining the possible association between fluoride in [drinking water](#) and risk of osteosarcoma or Ewing sarcoma.

"Karen Blakey used sophisticated software to link together data on the geographical distributions of bone cancer incidence and fluoride levels.

Statistical modelling of these data showed that there was no evidence of an association."

Andy Hall, chairman of BCRT's Independent Scientific Advisory Committee, welcomed the findings of the study.

"Bone cancer is diagnosed in about 550 patients every year in the UK and Ireland, many of whom are children. However, at present, very little is known of the factors which trigger the disease.

"The study funded by the Bone Cancer Research Trust and reported by the team in Newcastle provides very important reassurance to patients and their relatives that fluoride is not involved in this process and shows that more research is needed to find out how this potentially devastating form of cancer can be prevented."

More information: Karen Blakey, Richard G Feltbower, Roger C Parslow, Peter W James, Basilio Gómez Pozo, Charles Stiller, Tim J Vincent, Paul Norman, Patricia A McKinney, Michael F Murphy, Alan W Craft, and Richard JQ McNally. "Is fluoride a risk factor for bone cancer? Small area analysis of osteosarcoma and Ewing sarcoma diagnosed among 0–49-year-olds in Great Britain, 1980–2005. *Int. J. Epidemiol.* first published online January 14, 2014 [DOI: 10.1093/ije/dyt259](https://doi.org/10.1093/ije/dyt259)

Provided by Newcastle University

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