

Foreword

The 50th Anniversary Conference on Salt Fluoridation,

A significant event of international impact took place in mid October 2005 at Zurich dedicated to the 50 years elapsed since salt fluoridation was first introduced and used in view of preventing dental caries.

The symposium was set up by the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences, Swiss Federal Office of Public Health, United Swiss Saltworks and Societé Suisse d'Odonto-stomatologie (SSO) and chaired by Professor Thomas Marthaler.

The name of Professor Thomas Marthaler, Professor Emeritus of Department of Preventive Dentistry, Periodontology and Cariology, Center for Dental and Oral Medicine and Maxillo-facial Surgery, the University of Zurich, is indissolubly linked to the pioneer's work on manufacturing, marketing and utilization of fluoridated salt in cario-prevention, first in Switzerland and later worldwide.

Having acted as Ass. Professor of Oral Epidemiology and Biostatistics at Zurich University in 1969-1975, Associated Professor of Oral Epidemiology and Preventive Dental Medicine in 1975-1995, temporary advisor with World Health Organization for Europe and America since 1977, Professor Emeritus and permanent advisor for WHO since 1995, Professor Thomas Marthaler has published over 300 scientific reports in profile international journals, most of which focus on the results of periodical longitudinal surveys on dental health of children in Zurich canton and other Swiss cantons, as well as on the consequence of fluoridated salt consumption on

children's carious indices.

The use of kitchen salt as a means of automated fluoridation ranks second after drinking water and followed in consequence of the successful addition of iodine to salt, initiated in Switzerland in 1922, in view of preventing endemic goiter.

The same Swiss doctor, H.J. Vespi, who concerned himself with preventing endemic goiter through adding iodine to kitchen salt, was the first to experiment salt addition to fluoride on cario-prophylactic purpose in mid 19th century.

Limited salt fluoridation was initiated in Switzerland in 1922, the manufacturing being carried out by United Swiss Saltworks, by adding 90 ppm F/kg of salt. The Zurich canton was the first worldwide where the use of iodine and fluoride enriched salt was sanctioned by the government.

The Zurich University likewise initiated and completed the most long-term longitudinal clinical surveys on the consequences of fluoridated salt consumption on dental caries incidence.

Fluoride concentration in the salt for human consumption was raised to 250 ppm F/kg salt in 1969 and extended to Vaud (1970) and Glarus (1974) cantons and subsequently nationwide in 1982.

As clinical surveys achieved all along these years in Switzerland by T.M. Marthaler, M. Steiner, G.D. Menghini, P. de Crousaz and others testified that the effects of 250 ppm F/kg fluoridated salt consumption are similar to 1 ppm F/l water con-

sumption, fluoridation of kitchen salt was extended worldwide.

Fluoridated salt consumption was later extended to Hungary (1966), Mexico (1973), Costa Rica and Jamaica (1986-1987), Uruguay (1991), Peru (1993), Bolivia (1996), Columbia (1989), Ecuador (1997), France (1986) and Germany (1991).

Currently, over 160 million people enjoy cario-preventive beneficial effects of fluoridated salt consumption.

The symposium assembled a great many physicians and researchers, outstanding personalities of preventive dentistry, many of whom are pioneers in salt fluoridation in their countries of origin, along with persons involved in fluoridated salt manufacturing and marketing all over the world: Prof. T.M. Marthaler (Switzerland), Prof. C. Amariei (Roumania), Prof. T. Athanassouli (Greece), Prof. P. Baehni (Switzerland), Prof. R. Baez (U.S.A.), Prof. J. Bánóczy (Hungary), Prof. Zdenek Broukal (Czech Republic), Prof. Hans Bürgi (Switzerland), Prof. P. de Crousaz (Switzerland), Prof. G. Hetzer (Germany), Prof. P. Hotz (Switzerland), Prof. T. Imfeld (Switzerland), Prof. K. König (Holland), Prof. M. Lennon (Great Britain), Prof. H. Limanowska-Shaw (Poland), Prof. C. Mexia de Almeida (Portugal), Prof. J. Meyer (Switzerland), Prof. C. Nuca (Roumania), Prof. P. Phantumvanit (Thailand), Prof. A. Podariu (Roumania), Prof. U. Saxer (Switzerland), Prof. A. Schulte (Germany), Prof. K. Stephen (Scotland), Prof. P. Tramini (France), Prof. M. Triller (France), Prof. W. van Palenstein (Netherlands), Prof. G. M. Whitford (U.S.A.), Eng. M. A. Anaya Alonso (Cuba), Dr. B. Boric (Croatia), Dr. J. Chlapowska (Poland), Dr. S. Dianiskova (Slovakia), Dr. S. Emiroglu (Turkey), Dr. A. Escobar (Colombia), Dr. G.M. Gillespie (Great Britain), Dr. F. Götzfried (Germany), Dr. E. E. Guile (Saudi Arabia), Dr. S. Heintze (Liechtenstein), Dr. C. Holmgren (France), Mr. G. Hunt (Great Britain), Dr. R. Kosem (Slovenia), Dr. U. Kowalski

(Germany), Dr. K. Luong Ngoc (Vietnam), Ms. J. McGinley (U.S.A.), Dr. G. Menghini (Switzerland), Eng. H. Pedrera (Cuba), Ms. E. Pellumbi (Albania), Ms. M. E. Rodriguez Gurza (Mexico), Dr. Z. Tóth (Hungary), Dr. A. Vitali (Italy), Dr. R. Yee (Nepal), and many others.

The scientific reports submitted in the symposium centered on all significant aspects pertaining to salt fluoridation for cario-preventive ends: the current worldwide stage of salt fluoridation, biological aspects related to fluoridation salt consumption, technical and legal aspects in terms of salt fluoridation and the role of salt fluoridation in community caries prevention.

Apart from academic aspects, the symposium was impressive, as was to be expected, from an organizational viewpoint. It was set up in the spirit of friendship, springing from the lofty common goal of promoting oro-dental health in individuals everywhere.

Professor Marthaler's efforts in convening personalities from all corners of the world were supported with devotion by his wife Marianne and one of his daughters, as well as by their close friends.

All that highlighted the outstanding stature of Professor Thomas Marthaler in his capacity as great human being, researcher and scientist.

I feel delighted to rank myself as a close friend of Professor Marthaler's who visited Constanta and promised to come over again in 2006 to share of his experience with the academic staff and doctors and hold lectures to students.

This will be a renewed opportunity to go up on the stage again, not only to serve oro-dental health, but to also enjoy folklore music of the two peoples by deriving advantage from Professor Thomas Marthaler's great musical aptitudes.

Prof. Corneliu Amariei, DMD, PhD
Founding Editor