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## Ramsoomair speaks out at forum

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Published on Oct 13, 2010

The final fluoride forum featured a surprise participant as mayoral candidate Franklin Ramsoomair made an impassioned plea against continuing the practice of water fluoridation in Waterloo.

“Is medication with an uncontrolled dose wrong? You can answer (that) in your own mind,” said Ramsoomair. “Is compulsory mass medication wrong? Is it medication or experimentation? You can answer (that) in your own mind?”

Hosted by Wonderful Waterloo, the last of three debates over the plebiscite question that will appear on the Oct. 25 ballot began with Andrew Hilliard of the online community group opening the floor to supporters of water fluoridation. Once again, representatives of the Ontario Dental Association, the only registered candidate in support of the Yes side, failed to attend. They did provide a brochure on the benefits of fluoridation.

That left the floor open to the No side of the debate with Ramsoomair, a retired professor from Wilfrid Laurier University, stressing that it should be up to the individual.

“Those who wish to take fluoride like me are better to get it from toothpaste than from the water supply,” he said. “If you want fluoride take it, but don’t abrogate the course of democracy and tell us you have to take it instead of us making that choice.”

He wasn’t the only mayoral candidate in the room, as Dale Ross also attended to listen to the discussion

He hasn’t publicly stated his view on the subject, saying it was a personal choice.

Representatives of WaterlooWatch presented next featuring the work of Paul Connett, a PhD in chemistry who heads the Fluoride Action Network in the U. S. The retired professor for St. Lawrence College’s latest book *The Case Against Fluoride: How Hazardous Water Ended Up in Our Drinking Water and the Bad Science and Powerful Politics that Keep it There* is set for release, and he presented some of his latest arguments to the audience of about 30 people.

“The evidence of the benefit is weak and there is no adequate margin of safety,” said Connett. “The promotion of fluoridation is unscientific.”

Connett said at best that water fluoridation delivers about half-a-cavity difference between those not drinking fluoride. But there is no control for dose, and there is no control for who is getting the fluoride, especially people who might have some susceptibility to the agent.



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– Franklin Ramsoomair  
Candidate for mayor  
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In fact, he said the current research shows fluoride works best topically than being ingested and working systematically through the body. The concern is that there is a lack of research about the health effects of long-term ingestion of fluoride.

“There is no research because they say there are no side effects,” said Connett.

“Apparently, this is the one drug that has no side effects.”

He was joined in his concern about the lack of research being done on water fluoridation by medical geologist Heather Gingerich.

She worried about how dumping all that hydrofluorosilic acid, with trace contaminants of arsenic and lead, is having on the Grand River watershed.

With only two per cent of that drinking water actually ingested, she said that 98 per cent of it is ending up downstream and is putting stress on species all ready at risk. A bellwether species such as turtles are already in distress, suggesting that humans drinking the water aren't too far behind.

The federal government has put a limit of the amount of fluoride that can be dumped into the water, and with communities like Waterloo adding it in, those limits probably are being exceeded. “One thing that Waterloo can do is vote on Oct. 25 to take this out of the water,” said Gingerich.

One member of the audience, who said he was still sitting on the fence, contesting claims that fluoridation was a reactive agent that help release more arsenic and lead into the water. But Connett said it's a known human carcinogen like lead, has no safe limits, and that we shouldn't be adding more of it to the water even in parts per billion.

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