

Fluor and Iodine Commission: Annual Report 2011

Mission

Initially founded to accompany the developments in connection with the usage of iodized salt in Switzerland, the commission nowadays engages in scientific and technical questions concerning iodine and fluoride intake, supervises cyclical monitoring of iodine intake in vulnerable populations in order to periodically adjust the iodine content of Swiss salt, and concerns itself with political issues in this field.

Members

Prof. Michael Bruce Zimmermann, Zürich, Präsident
Prof. Ursula Ackermann-Lieblich, Basel
Prof. Hans Bürgi, Solothurn
Prof. Hans Gerber, Bern
Dr. Michael Beer, BAG representative, Bern
Dr. Jürg Lieberherr, Pratteln
Prof. Thomas M. Marthaler, Zürich
Prof. Christoph A. Meier, Zürich
Dr. Giorgio Menghini, Zürich
Prof. Jürg Meyer, Riehen
Dr. Katharina Quack Lötscher, Oberrieden

Activities 2011

The Annual Meeting of the Fluoride and Iodine Commission (FIC) was held at the ETH Zürich, March 17, 2011.

In the first half of the year, there was active discussion and exchange of ideas between the SAMW, the commission members, the EEK and the BAG on the supervision and responsibilities of the FIC, precipitated by the proposal of the SAMW to sever the longstanding relationship between the SAMW and the FIC, and shift supervision of the FIC to a Federal body such as the EEK or the BAG. In the end, it was decided that the FIC should remain in the SAMW, and the FIC acknowledged and welcomed the continuing partnership with the SAMW.

Based on the results of the 2009 Swiss Iodine Survey, done by the ETH Zürich under the supervision of FIC members Prof. Zimmermann and Prof. Bürgi, the FIC decided to propose to the BAG and the Rheinsalinen to increase the iodine concentration in Swiss salt for households and industry from 20 (current level) to 25 ppm. That survey showed still adequate iodine intake in Swiss children, but only borderline adequate intakes in pregnant women, and slightly low intakes in infants.

In discussion with Dr Beer at the BAG, it was decided that the proposed increase in salt iodine concentration would await the results of the 'Expert Report on Iodine', that has been commissioned in 2011 by the Federal Nutrition Commission, and will be written in 2011-2012 by members of the FIC and two guest authors (details follow).

The major activity of the FIC in 2011 has been development and writing of the EEK commissioned Expert Report 2011 "Iodine supply in Switzerland: current status and recommendations".

For this Report, the Working Group consists of three FIC members: Prof. Dr.med Michael Zimmermann (President), Human Nutrition Laboratory, ETH Zürich, Prof.Dr.med. Hans Bürgi, Solothurn, and Prof. Christoph A. Meier, Dept. für Innere Medizin, Stadtspital Triemli, Zürich.

- The five chapters will be written by Prof. Dr.med. Hans Bürgi (FIC) (Epidemiology and history of iodine nutrition in Switzerland), Dr. med. Katharina Quack Lötscher (FIC) (Iodine in pregnancy and infancy, and the importance of iodine in weaning foods), Prof. Dr.med Michael Zimmermann (FIC) (The effects of iodine deficiency on cognition and learning in children and the effects of varying iodine status on thyroid function in adults), Dr. Max Haldimann, BAG (Sources of iodine in Swiss diets) and Dr. Maria Andersson, ETH Zürich (The importance of iodized salt use by the food industry in industrialized countries like Switzerland where most salt is consumed in processed foods).
- The content and form will be directed to readers mainly interested in practical aspects of the subject, relevant for the people in Switzerland. Science and literature should be summarized in brief. Each contribution should have a summary of the consequences and/or recommendations.

In August 2011, FIC President Prof. Zimmermann gave an invited lecture to the Thai Ministry of Health and representatives of WHO in SE Asia on the success of the Swiss iodized salt program. In September 2011, FIC member Prof. Bürgi presented the Swiss iodized salt program in a lecture at the European Thyroid Association in Krakow, Poland. These lectures highlighted the fact that the Swiss iodized salt program, carefully monitored by the FIC, with periodic adjustments to the iodine content in salt, is the leading worldwide example of a long-running (since the 1920s) and effective salt iodization program.



Michael Bruce Zimmermann
President of the Commission
Zürich, December 2, 2011