

## Harvard Researchers Link Tap Water Contents to ADHD, Autism

By Nora Al Baghdadi

The Sydney Morning Herald recently revealed that [Harvard researchers found a link between fluoridated water and mental disorders](#) such as ADHD. The Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH) revealed in March 2014 that chemicals in our tap water have a clear connection to increased rates of autism spectrum disorder, ADHD and other developmental/mental health disorders. Dr. Philippe Grandjean and Dr. Philip J. Landrigan published the results of their neurological study in *The Lancet Neurology*, Harvard's peer-reviewed scientific journal, in March of 2014. Among the doctors' most significant discoveries was the fact that chemicals could heighten children's chances of neuro-developmental disabilities, including serious and lifelong learning disabilities and mood disorders.

The fear of autism has even motivated many parents to opt out of required vaccines, leading to the recent reemergence of preventable but debilitating diseases such as polio. This unwarranted tradeoff has little foundation in scientific evidence, but the study explored a very real connection between mental disorders and something to which most parents don't give a second thought: tap water. Specifically, the chemicals that many companies use to treat tap water.

Fluoride is a chemical with proven neurotoxicity, but Americans have consumed it for decades, often without knowing. Many cities pump fluoridated tap water into their residents' homes, and the presence of the chemical prevents teeth enamel from eroding. However, the HSPH study suggests that chemical manufacturers only fluoridated water in order to dispose of toxic waste, and that its cumulative effect can damage the human mind and body, including by significantly lowering the IQ of children and teenagers.

The pair of environmentally-conscious researchers stressed the importance of proper chemical testing in their paper, warning that the general public had no idea that water treatment plants and private utility companies conducted their own independent research in order to verify the safety of the chemicals they used. Chemicals are at the heart of the autism debate as well, with critics arguing that the chemical ingredients of certain vaccines cannot be trusted because no one can prove their effects on developing fetuses and children. The Harvard study's results were so definitive that the doctors argued adamantly that all governments should immediately cease water fluoridation altogether.

Fluoride disrupts the body's natural production of endocrine, according to the U.S. National Research Council of the National Academies (NRC). It can therefore interfere with hormone production, reduce the body's calcium levels to degrade the bones and blood, and even elevate

## Al-Nasser University

melatonin levels so much that puberty happens earlier and unnatural circadian rhythms. European doctors in the early 20th century even prescribed fluoride to patients with hyperthyroidism, but now it's Americans who take the cake for worldwide fluoride consumption.

Lower-income Americans face a particularly high likelihood of being exposed to fluoride on a daily basis. Black children in particular are more harmed by fluoride more than any other demographic, with higher rates and more severe occurrences of dental fluorosis. This is a worrying statistic, because this same demographic has the poorest access to mental health resources, preventative medical care and education systems that cater toward children with developmental or learning conditions.

Thousands of parents responded to a National Children's Health Survey in 2007, and the results suggested that at least one percent of American children suffered from a mental disorder on the autism spectrum. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated that 280 million people, or one in every 110 people, currently live with some form of autism. This once little-known disorder is now the subject of passionate media debates and federally funded education and vocational programs, and children who receive this diagnosis are half as likely to graduate from high school.

In light of the results of this study, those in the academic and medical fields will continue to push for stricter tap water regulations and increased public awareness about the dangers of fluoride.