

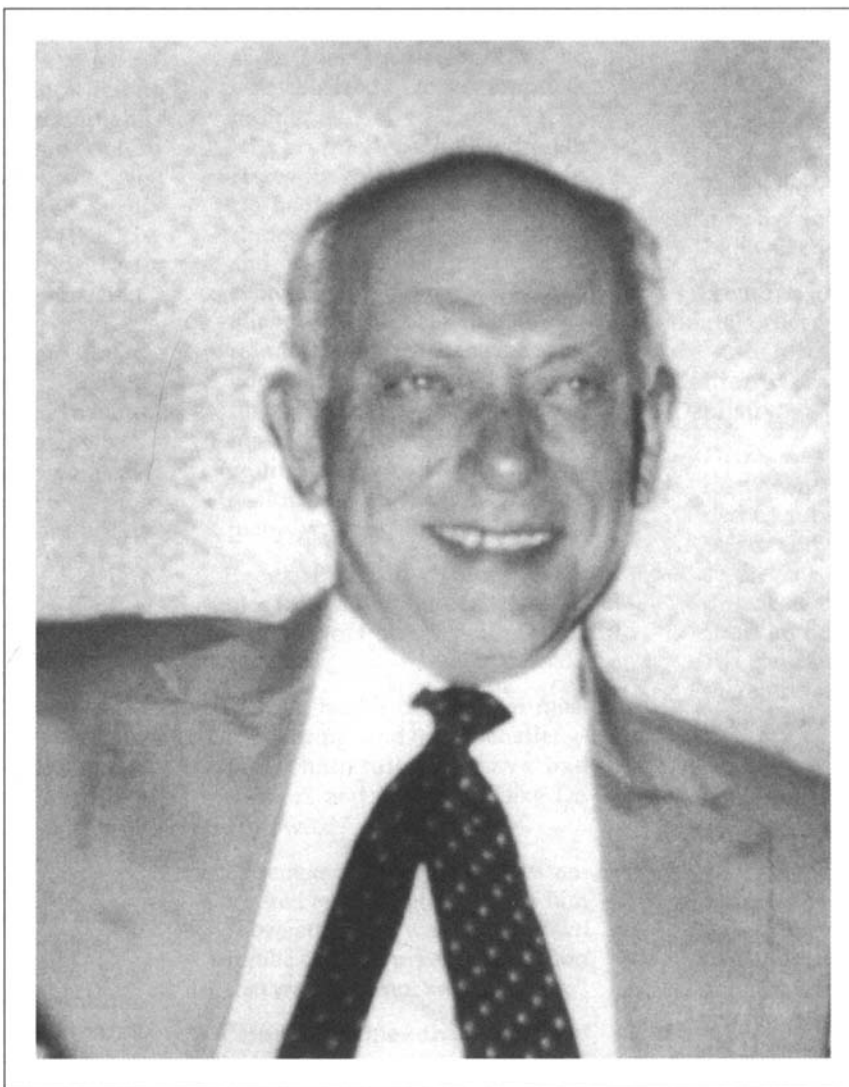
## Introduction to the Herschel S. Horowitz Memorial Special Issue

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The proceedings from two very special memorial symposia commemorating the works and life of Herschel S. Horowitz are found in this issue of the *Journal of Public Health Dentistry*. One, the "Herschel S. Horowitz Memorial Symposium: a Celebration of His Science and His Legacy," was sponsored by the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, National Institutes of Health (December 2003) and held on the NIH campus from which Hersch conducted his many clinical trials. The other, the "Herschel S. Horowitz Memorial Symposium: Recent Advances in the Fluoride Legacy," was held at the National Oral Health Conference (May 2004) with a dental public health audience (Hersch's home away from home), comprising members of the American Association of Dental Public Health, American Board of Dental Public Health, and Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors, among others. These proceedings provide us with both a retrospective of Hersch's studies, writings, and vision, and an imperative for action.

The papers cover the evolution of our understanding of the dental caries preventive effects of fluoride and

sealants and pose research questions for the future. In these reviews one can envision the excitement and passion that led to the launch of early research and subsequent studies. There is no



question Dr. Herschel S. Horowitz played a major catalytic role in leading and stimulating scientific investigations whose results extended the use of fluoride for professional, public health, and self-care applications and

critically studied the effects of combined preventive measures. Together with his collaborators, he implemented carefully designed studies that sequentially unveiled the many fluoride, and fluoride and sealant, interventions constituting our current preventive dentistry armamentarium nationally and internationally.

During the symposium presentations, I recalled many past symposia on similar topics, ones where Hersch, usually first at the microphone, posed probing question after question to clarify issues of research design, data analysis, or interpretation. He always was on topic and targeted the heart of the issue. His comments opened lively discussions that demonstrated clear paths for further investigations. And so, these memorial symposium papers appropriately identify paths for further

investigation.

Most recently, Surgeon General Richard H. Carmona issued a Surgeon General Statement on Community Water Fluoridation (July 28, 2004). Again, it made me recall Hersch's mus-

ings and writings on the “ideal public health measure,” one that is low in cost, easy to use, and accessible to all. Hersh’s work on fluorides and water fluoridation continually aimed toward those ideals.

Still, there remains much work to be done. Hersh always had multiple ongoing projects and studies. As you read these papers and the proposed recommendations for research and action, remember that this field was but one of many stimulated by Dr. Herschel S. Horowitz.

We are fortunate to have had the

benefit of Hersh’s scientific leadership and his vision for dental public health. We now desperately need the next generation of dental public health researchers to lead the further development of disease prevention and health promotion interventions as thoroughly and methodically as did Hersh and his incredible research collaborators, especially Stanley Heifetz. They will need to have a population-based, public health, interdisciplinary perspective; be well versed in the science base; and be armed with the latest in biomedical and behavioral technolo-

gies, clinical trials methodology, and bioethics. They will go through uncharted territory, as did Hersh, to address the complexity of the environmental, social, genetic, and behavioral aspects of dental caries. They will need to have the compassion and commitment to take the difficult steps to ensure the transfer of that science into hands of communities, individuals, and practitioners.

Let’s get to work. It is our responsibility to take action and build on Dr. Herschel S. Horowitz’ legacy.