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MEDIA STATEMENT

ASMI provides reassurance on antiseptic mouthwashes

The Australian Self-Medication Industry (ASMI) today reassured consumers about the safety of antiseptic mouthwashes.

A review article published in the current issue of the *Australian Dental Journal* explores a speculated link between antiseptic mouthwashes that contain alcohol and an increased risk of oral cancer.¹ However, the paper does not reflect the full body of scientific evidence and adds no new scientific data regarding antiseptic mouthwashes.

In a letter to the editors of the journal, Professor Laurence Walsh, Head of the School of Dentistry at the University of Queensland criticises the paper for drawing on a “small and selective group of studies” and points out there is no established, causal relationship between oral cancer and mouthwashes.

According to Professor Walsh, a careful reading of the entire literature on the topic does not suggest that the use of antiseptic mouthwashes containing alcohol increases the risk of oral cancer.

“A wide range of critical and systematic reviews over many years have failed to show any statistically significant association between mouthwash use and oral cancer. There is certainly nothing in the current paper to change our thinking in that regard,” said Professor Walsh.

According to Professor Walsh, mouthwashes continue to play an important role in improving dental hygiene.

“Antiseptic mouthwashes play an important role in helping to reduce gum inflammation and plaque. Most antiseptic mouthwashes contain alcohol and there is no doubt they are effective and safe when used appropriately,” said Professor Walsh.

About ASMI: The Australian Self-Medication Industry (ASMI) is the peak industry body for the Australian self care industry representing consumer healthcare products including over-the-counter medicines and complementary medicines. ASMI’s mission is to promote better health through responsible self-care. This means ensuring that safe and effective self-care products are readily available to all Australians at a reasonable cost. ASMI works to encourage responsible use by consumers and an increasing role for cost-effective self-medication products as part of the broad national health strategy.
www.asmi.com.au

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¹ McCullough and Farah *Australian Dental J.* November 2008 .

