

Editorial

An “American Mystery Disease”?

Paul G. King, PhD

PhD Analytical Chemist, MS Inorganic Chemist

FAME Systems

33A Hoffman Avenue

Lake Hiawatha, NJ 07034 USA

Phone: +1 973 263 4843

Email: DrKing@gti.net Website: <http://www.Dr-King.com>

In the 1950's, Japan had a “localized” incident where the discharge of mercury-containing waste into Minimata Bay led to the poisoning of tens of thousands to perhaps 200,000 or more of the Japanese people with the compound “methyl mercury” into which the food chain had converted and, in fish, stored the mercury from that waste.

The adults and children consuming the fish were slowly poisoned; fetuses were aborted, and breast-fed babies were poisoned by their mother's milk.

Initially, the Japanese called the problem the “strange” disease and the people who had it were blamed and shunned.

The government and the company responsible for dumping the waste both proclaimed their innocence.