

A comparison of the public's perception of Water Fluoridation based on social media posts between June 2015 and March 2021

In June 2015 I carried out a study to determine the public's perception of water fluoridation based on social media posts. I have carried out two of my original searches again in March 2021 to compare to the results from June 2015.

Results - Twitter

Figure 1 shows the percentage of Twitter accounts which were pro-, neutral and anti- 'water fluoridation' and 'fluoridation' in June 2015. In June 2015 there were 109 unique Twitter accounts compared to 26 unique Twitter accounts in March 2021.

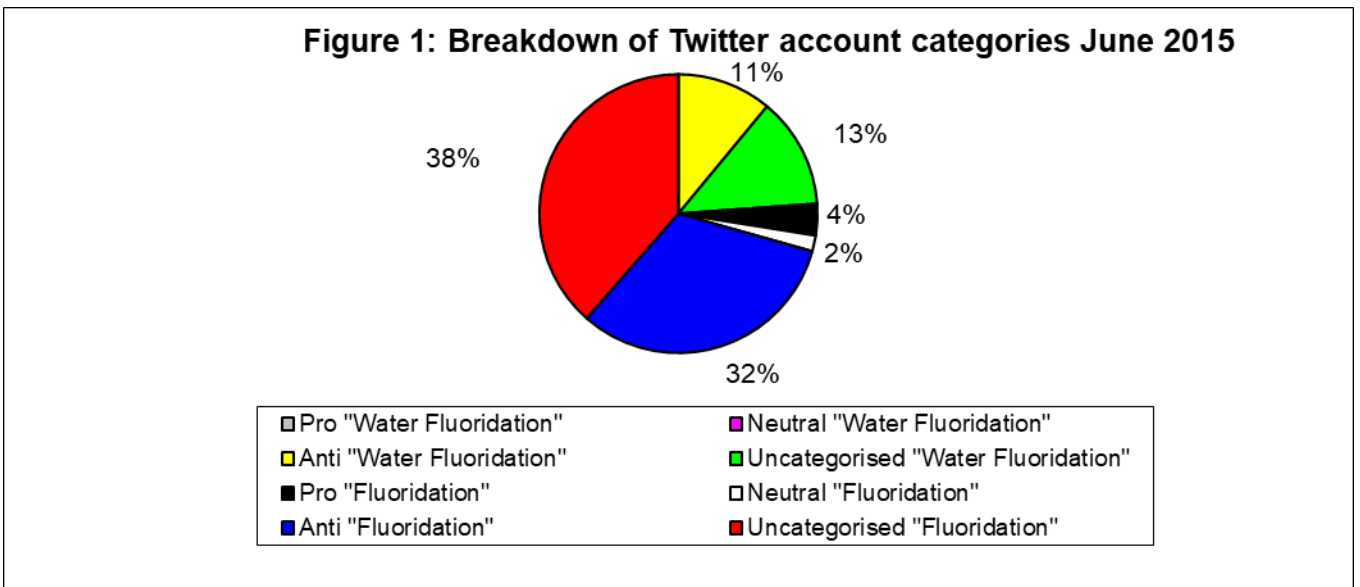


Figure 2 shows the percentage of Twitter accounts which were pro-, neutral and anti- 'water fluoridation' and 'fluoridation' in March 2021.

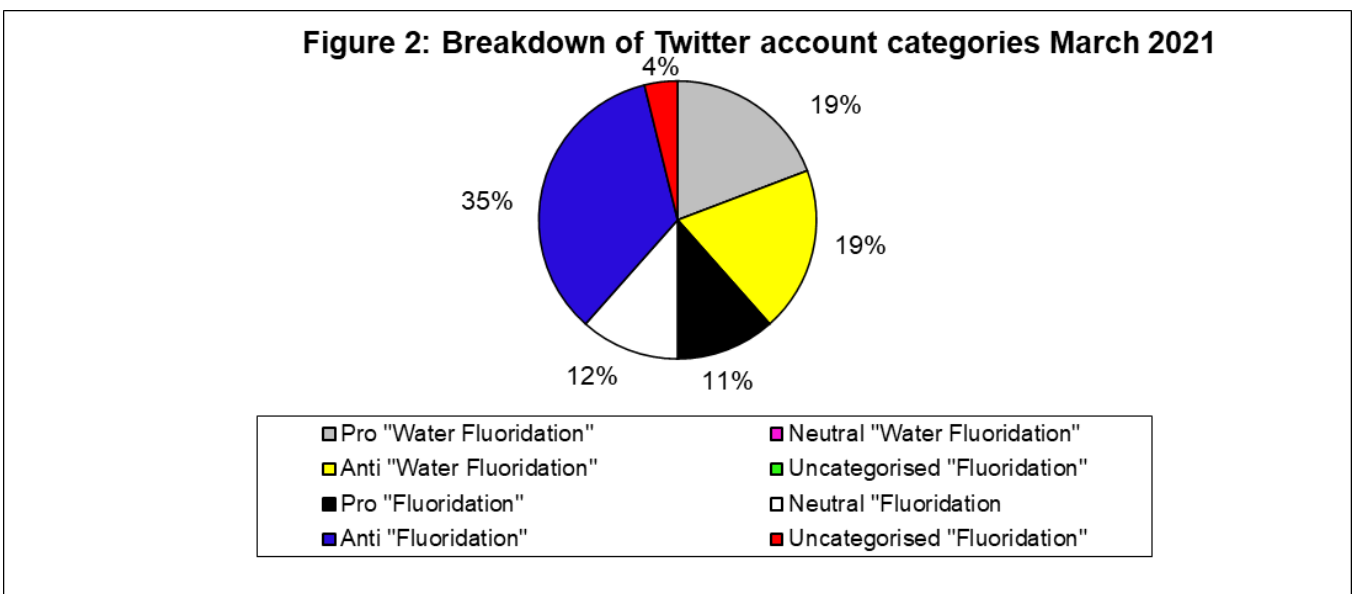
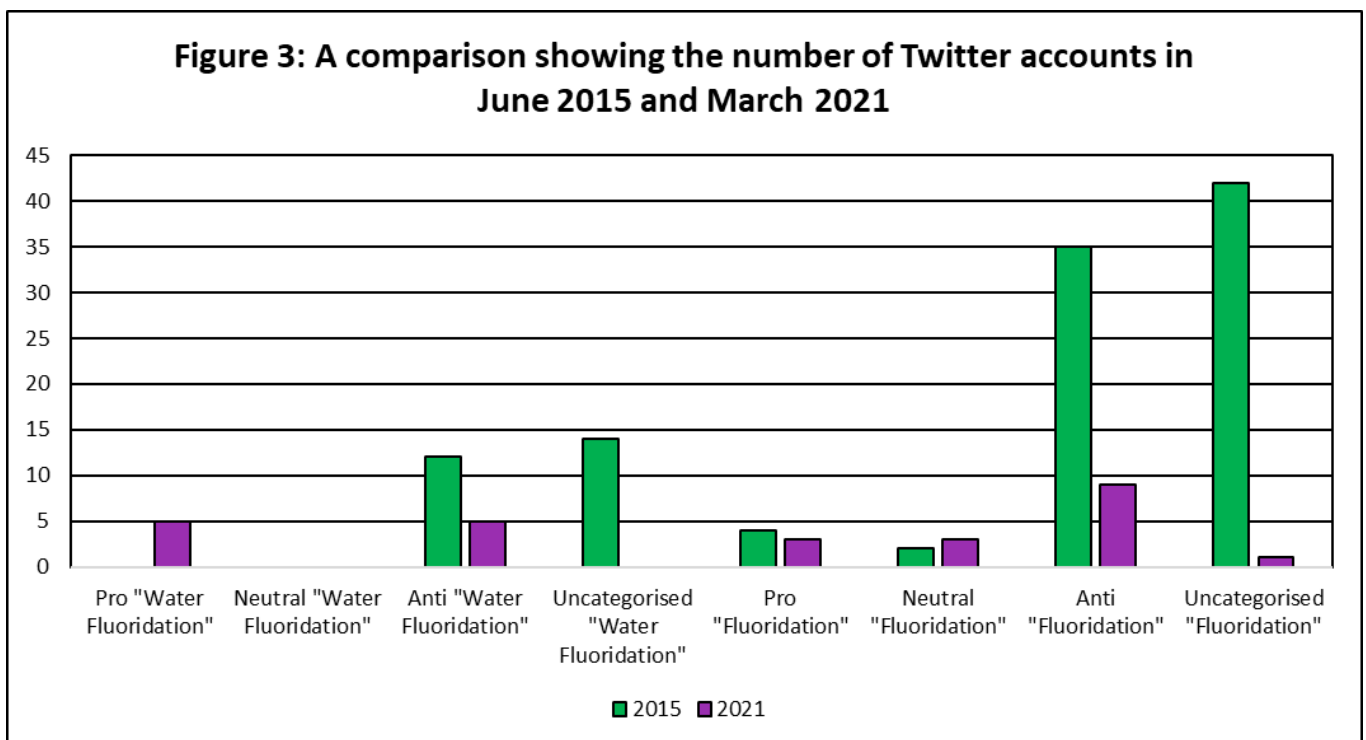


Figure 3 below is a comparison of the accounts between the two years. Key findings between the two years are:

- The number of Twitter accounts appearing in the 'water fluoridation' and 'fluoridation' search have reduced from 109 in June 2015 to 26 in March 2021.
- The percentage of anti 'water fluoridation' accounts have increased from 11% of the total accounts in June 2015 to 19% in March 2021.
- The percentage of anti 'fluoridation' accounts have increased from 32% of the total accounts in June 2015 to 35% in March 2021.
- 19% of Twitter accounts in March 2021 are pro 'water fluoridation'. In June 2015 no accounts were pro 'water fluoridation'.
- In March 2021 it was easier to place the Twitter accounts into pro-, neutral and anti-'water fluoridation' and 'fluoridation'. Only 1 account was classed as uncategorised in March 2021 compared to 56 accounts in June 2015.



Results - Facebook

The Facebook search was to find out the number of people, pages, places, groups and events when searching both terms "Water Fluoridation" and "Fluoridation". Figure 4 shows the results from June 2015, with the majority of the search results being anti- and predominantly either anti- groups & anti-pages towards water fluoridation and fluoridation.

Figure 4: Facebook activity when searching the terms "Water Fluoridation" and "Fluoridation" June 2015

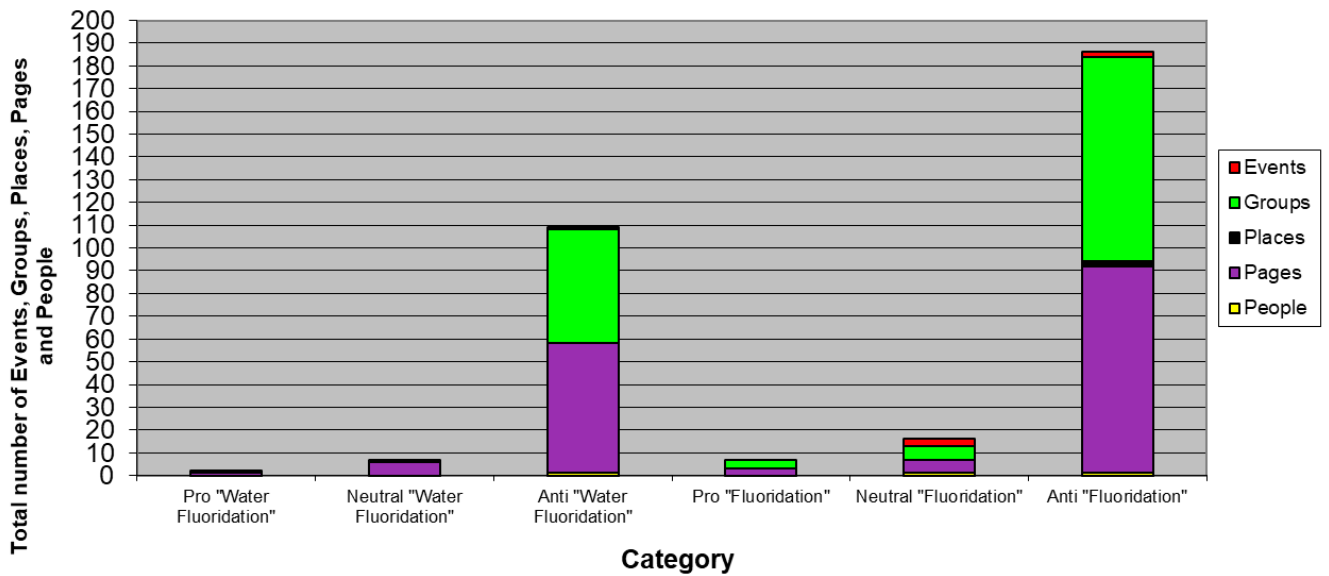


Figure 5 shows the results from March 2021, with the majority of the search results still being anti- and predominantly either anti- groups & anti-pages towards water fluoridation and fluoridation.

Figure 5: Facebook activity when searching the terms "Water Fluoridation" and "Fluoridation" March 2021

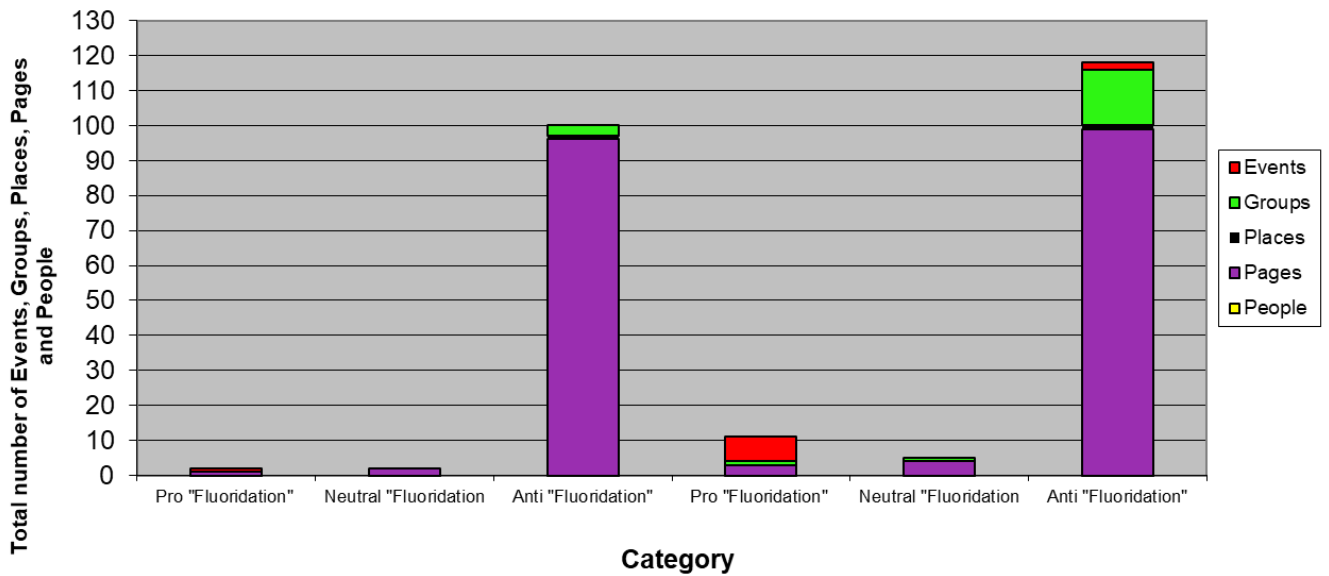
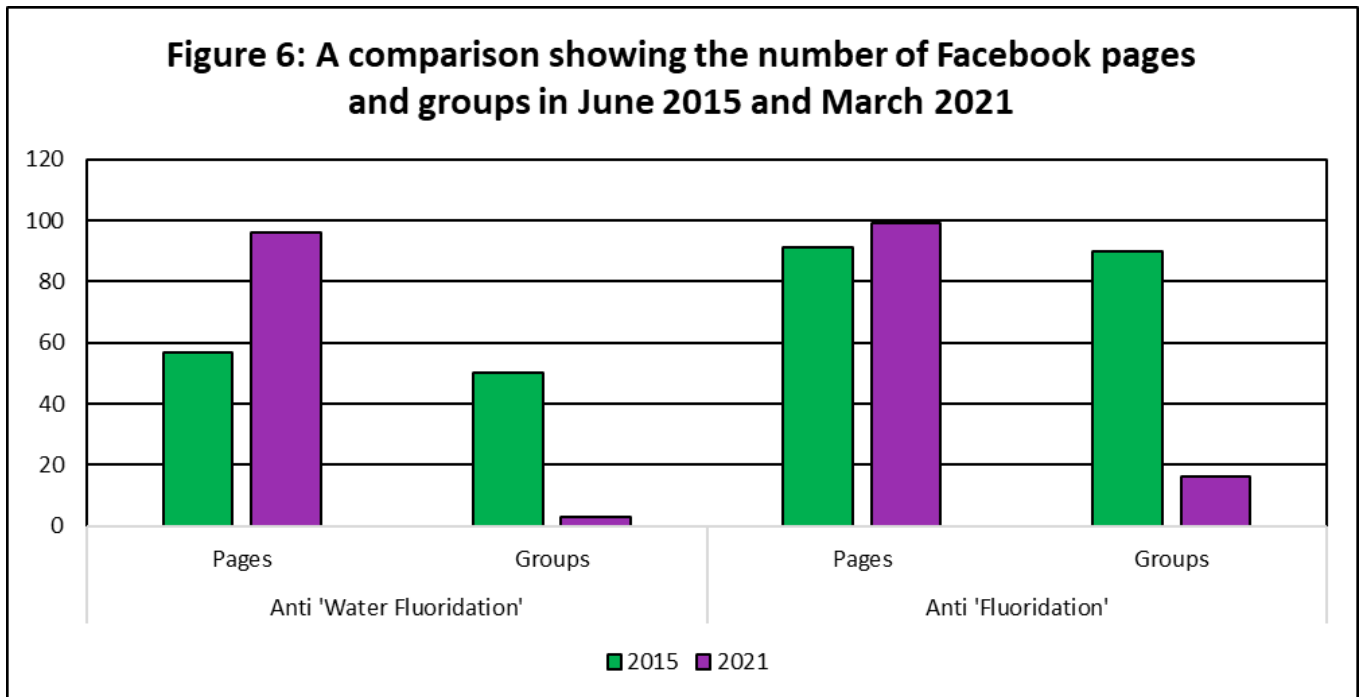


Figure 6 below is the comparison between the anti 'water fluoridation' and anti 'fluoridation' Facebook groups and pages in June 2015 and March 2021.



Key findings between the two years are:

- The number anti 'water fluoridation' and anti 'fluoridation' pages have increased from June 2015 and March 2021.
- The number anti 'water fluoridation' and anti 'fluoridation' groups have decreased from June 2015 and March 2021.
- Looking back to Figure 5 and the pro 'fluoridation' bar (red), there are 7 pro 'fluoridation' Facebook events compared to 2 anti 'fluoridation' events in March 2021.

Conclusion

The collated data indicates that the majority of social media activity on both Facebook and Twitter is still anti-water fluoridation/ anti-fluoridation. The key findings and differences between the two years have been considered.

The BFS are now using Facebook and Twitter. They are in a good position to use their social media accounts to post and tweet information that is evidence based which would be useful for members of the public to see.