Norwegian experiences on phasing out the use of dental amalgam

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Phasing out the use of dental amalgam

- Work towards reducing and eliminating the use of amalgam as tooth restoring material started in the early 1990’s.
- The Norwegian Health Authorities made an inventory on practices in dental clinics in 1998.
- Based on that, guidelines were introduced in 1991 (updated in 2003) for dentists for the use of dental filling materials.
  - amalgam should not be the first choice for dental fillings
  - use of amalgam should be limited as much as possible in consideration to the environment and possible adverse health effects
Further action

• The Environmental Authorities conducted an impact assessment in 2005 on a possible general ban on the use of mercury in products:
  – Identification of areas where a ban could be introduced without major problems and areas of use in which there will be a need for time-limited or permanent exemptions,
  – Conclusions regarding dental amalgam;
    • Alternatives to dental amalgam, like composites, have good technical properties.
    • A ban will ensure total phase out.

➢ A general ban on the use of mercury in products, which includes prohibition on the use of dental amalgam, was introduced in 2008
Phase out period

• Exemptions for three years for
  – amalgam for use in dental treatment of patients who must be treated under general anaesthesia or
  – patients who are allergic to ingredients in other dental fillings

• Experiences in the three year period;
  – no complaints have been sent to either the Health or the Environmental authorities,
  – no questioning about the expired exemptions.

• Adverse reaction unit on dental biomaterials (University of Bergen)
Experiences in Norway

• Alternatives used in Norway are composites and glass ionomers

• Best practices
  – Oral health prevention of caries
  – Minimal intervention
  – Education of dentists

• Success factors
  – Change of attitude by dentists
  – Allowance for a phase out period

• Barriers
  – Older dentists ’cling’ to amalgam
  – Development of more durable alternative material
Thank you for your attention

Relevant web sites for information:

Norwegian Directorate of Health  www.helsedirektoratet.no

Climate and Pollution Agency  www.klif.no

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