

REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA
EXPERIENCE WITH THE USE AND
PHASE-OUT OF DENTAL AMALGAM



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Republic of Moldova has ratified the Minamata Convention in 2017, being the first country in the CEE region. The ratification and early implementation of the Minamata Convention, was supported by the UNEP/GEF Project "Enabling activity development of Minamata initial assessment in the Republic of Moldova", which assisted the Government of the Republic of Moldova, through the Ministry of Environment, to prepare the grounds to ratify the Minamata Convention on Mercury and to build national capacity to meet reporting and other obligations under the Convention. As a part of the enabling activity, the national inventory on mercury releases for reference year 2014 has been developed and included the assessment of the use of dental amalgam fillings.

In response to the call of the Secretariat to collect from Parties and others information pursuant to paragraph 7, Article 4 of the Convention, i.e. information related to the availability, technical and economic feasibility and environmental and health risks and benefits of the non-mercury alternatives to dental amalgam, the Republic of Moldova would like to express its continuous support towards implementation of the Minamata Convention and aligns to the global efforts to phase down the use dental amalgam fillings.

Having been part of the Soviet Union, which rarely used any amalgam at all, dentistry in Moldova has been very close to be mercury-free since the proclamation of independence in 1991. The experience of the Republic of Moldova proved that the alternatives are technically feasible and economically feasible, and it is known for a generation of time.

In 2019, the country proudly stepped up and made the decision to end all amalgam use, by making a relevant prohibition in the Chemicals Law no. 277/2018. It should be noted that even though other European countries ended amalgam with exceptions; the Republic of Moldova went further, ending all amalgam use as of this year, 2020.

Republic of Moldova is a small country and at an income level below other countries in Europe. Yet, we can therefore say: "Here is the proof that the transition to mercury-free dentistry is economically feasible and we hope that our experience is a lesson to countries on every continent. Mercury-free dentistry is economically feasible and technically feasible and it has major environmental advantages because it eliminates one major source of mercury, as well as protects the public health.

THE EVOLUTION IN USE OF MERCURY IN DENTAL FILINGS IN MOLDOVA

The dental care system in the Republic of Moldova is well developed and is primarily represented by private clinics that constantly modernize the equipment and materials. The transition to self-management of the stomatological service brought new and more effective opportunities, with a higher performance of financial resources, that could be used for the overhauls of stomatological buildings, for buying modern techniques and materials. The materials used for teeth restorations are mostly polymers, represented mostly by composite

resin fillings and glass ionomer fillings. Today compomers, giomers, and dental porcelain inlays, gold inlays and full crowns are also used as alternatives to dental amalgam.

The official data on the use of dental amalgam fillings in the Republic of Moldova was provided by the Republican Dental Clinic (see attachment), which was founded in 1967. According to it, due to complicated technology and harmful action on workers' health care, amalgams were not used broadly in dentistry. In addition, the dental amalgam raised aesthetic concerns and was applied only to molar teeth positioned distally in the oral cavity. Since 1982 to present, the country has not imported mercury containing dental fillings and in the 90s, all the remained dental amalgam was exported to European countries, mostly Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey.

The Dental Clinic also noted in its reply that, during soviet times gold was widely used in dental prosthesis and complaints were coming from patients, because the crowns windowed very quickly and some dark depositions appeared. It was found that these pathologies were recorded even on patients who had teeth treated with amalgam fillings, even if the fillings had been removed.

It is worth mentioning that in Moldova obligatory medical insurance covers only some dental services, among which emergencies, prophylactic consultation for children up to 18 years and pregnant women, and full-volume dental care, except for dentures and dental restorations, for children up to 12 years. The medical insurance in other countries provides for dental cover and in most cases the restorative materials used are represented by amalgams, because they are generally less expensive than most alternatives. Considering high emigration rate among Moldovan population, there are records of Moldovan citizens working in these countries that return home with mercury amalgam fillings, however very few in number - 12-15 patients per year or about 0.001% / year.

More than that, dental tourism business is very developed in Moldova and provides dental services to patients from abroad.

REGULATORY ACTION

In relation to the implementation of the Minamata Convention, the Government of the Republic of Moldova has approved several legislative initiatives, in particular it is worth mentioning the Art. 17 of the Chemicals Law no. 277/2018¹ which prohibits the manufacture, place on market and use mercury and its compounds in several measuring devices such as thermometers, manometers, barometers, sphygmomanometers, as well as in dental amalgams.

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¹ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=112668&lang=ro



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Ministrului Mediului
al Republicii Moldova
dlui Valeriu MUNTEANU

IMSP Policlinica Stomatologică Republicană la scrisoarea № 62 din 15.12.2015 „Cu privire la pregătirea Inventarului Național al emisiilor de mercur din Republica Moldova” vă informează următoarele:

- Policlinica Stomatologică Republicană a fost fondată la 12.10.1966 și activitatea practică a început în anul 1967.

- Documentația medicală statistică stomatologică nu prevede evidența obturațiilor dentare după materialele aplicate în procesul de tratament.

- Din cauza tehnologiei complicate și acțiunii dăunătoare asupra sănătății lucrătorilor medicali, amalgamele nu a avut o implementare largă în practica stomatologică.

- Amalgama nu corespunde cerințelor estetice și era aplicată numai pe dinții molari poziționați distal în cavitatea bucală.

- Din 1982 până în prezent, Republica Moldova nu a primit materiale pentru obturații dentare care ar conține mercur.

- Toate materialele (amalgama) care conțineau mercur în anii 1990 când s-au deschis hotarele, au fost solicitate de țările din Europa, preponderent România, Bulgaria, Turcia și pe diferite căi au fost expediate în aceste țări.

- În prezent amalgama se mai practică în stomatologie în unele țări și se aplică în Programul Asigurărilor obligatorii de asistență medicală. Conaționali noștri care activează în aceste țări se întorc în țară cu obturații din amalgam, dar sunt foarte puțini, în număr de 12-15 pacienți, ponderea cărora constituie 0,001%.

- În perioada Uniunii Sovietice în practica protezării dentare pe larg se folosea aurul. De la pacienți parveneau plângeri, fiindcă coroanele se fenestrau foarte repede și apăreau niște depuneri întunecate. În urma studiului efectuat s-a constatat că aceste patologii apăreau la pacienții care aveau dinți tratați cu obturații de amalgam, chiar dacă obturațiile fuseseră înlăturate.

- În ultima perioadă pe piață apar noi tehnologii și materiale stomatologice mai calitative care corespund cerințelor pacienților la zi și sunt mai compatibile cu organismul uman.

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