



Mercury screening

Sheffield Assay Office Analytical Services provides a comprehensive and confidential service to assess occupational exposure to mercury for dentists and those working with mercury in an industrial environment.

Occupational Health

Mercury is a toxic element and is included in the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) document EH 40. By law the occupational exposure to mercury must be assessed and controlled, as described by the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH).

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (2002). The Occupational Exposure Standard (OES) for mercury vapour in air is now $20\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. The HSE guidance note MS12 relates this OES to a urinary health guidance value (HGV) for mercury of $20\mu\text{mol Hg} / \text{mol creatinine}$.

The Health and Safety Executive recommends that, as part of a risk assessment, regular urinary mercury determinations be undertaken for staff occupationally exposed to mercury. Where these measurements exceed the advised level then working practices and controls should be reviewed to ensure compliance with the OES.

www.assayoffice.co.uk/analytical-services



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The Service

Dr. Peter Warren developed the UK Mercury Screening Service (UKMSS) which now operates from Sheffield Assay Office Analytical Services.

Personal mercury levels are determined through the analysis of a urine sample. Analysis is by either cold vapour atomic absorption spectrophotometry or ICP-MS.

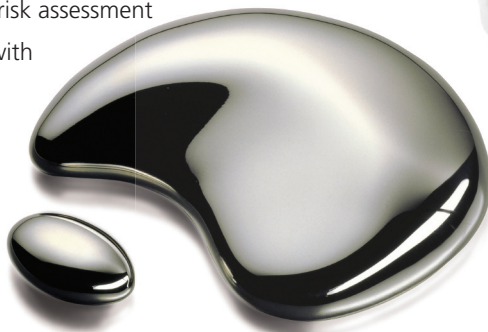
Where results are higher than would normally be expected, an initial consultation is included. This is generally an explanation of the results and advice on occupational house-keeping. Should further consultation be required we will be happy to help.

The UKMSS strongly recommends the screening of a potential employee as part of the enrolment process.

The analytical data collated by UKMSS, covering the exposure level of the dental team over the last 10 years shows that dental nurses consistently have the highest exposure to mercury vapour. Female dental nurses could potentially be working in the dental surgery during the first months of pregnancy.

Summary

- Personal mercury analysis
- Confidential service
- High accuracy
- First stage of risk assessment
- Compliance with COSHH



O F F I C E

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