



National Center for Health Statistics
6525 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, Maryland 20782

January 13, 1995

Arnold Wendroff, PhD
544 Eight Street
Brooklyn, NY 11215-4201

Dear Dr. Wendroff:

Thank you for your interest in the 1997 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. We have received your letter suggesting the assessment of domestic mercury exposure and the related background articles. These materials are in the process of being reviewed by members of the Division of Health Examination Statistics.

We appreciate receiving input from your research community. If you have further questions, please contact Natalie Dupree at (301) 436-7080, extension 137. Thank you again for your interest.

Vicki L. Burt
Chief, Survey Planning and
Development Branch



Agency for Toxic Substances
and Disease Registry
Atlanta GA 30333

Arnold P. Wendroff, Ph.D.
Mercury Poisoning Project
544 Eighth Street
Brooklyn, New York 11215-4201

May 5, 1995

Dear Dr. Wendroff:

There are several aspects of the public health hazard of mercury. ATSDR is examining the health risks from mercury from the perspective of toxicology, exposures at hazardous waste sites especially biota and the accidental exposure in homes, schools and the general environment. ATSDR has publications on the toxicology of mercury. Including the toxicological profile on mercury, a peer reviewed document.

Your letter expressed specific concerns about the use of mercury in religious practices and a project that was conducted by the Connecticut Department of Health Services (CDHS) and ATSDR in Hartford, Connecticut. This was an investigation of the factors associated with use of mercury in religious practices by some members of the Hispanic community in the greater Hartford area. The objective of the study was to survey the basic knowledge on the popular use of Azogue among Hispanic and other ethnic groups. The project had two phases, the determination of ethnic factors which influenced the religious use of mercury and the development of bilingual/bicultural educational materials that would increase community awareness on potential health risk from mercury. The CDHS staff indicated that while sampling was not an objective of the study sampling of homes was attempted. However, CDHS, the Hartford Health Department, and the Hispanic Health Council were unable to obtain permission. From the residents to either sample their homes for biomedical tests. The principle investigator pointed out that attempts by health agencies to force sampling of private homes has caused the Hispanic community to deny the use of the Azogue and impaired the ability of the public health agencies to institute effective prevention programs. The Connecticut study achieved the objective of defining the scope of the practice in a Northeastern city and forms the basis for the development of effective preventive public health messages. Further, the findings have shown that public health interventions must respect the culture of the hispanic communities in order to be successful.

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ATSDR will continue to work on the health risks of mercury from the perspective of public health from different exposures. Thank you for you interest.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Barry L. Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Barry L. Johnson, Ph.D.
Assistant Surgeon General
Assistant Administrator



National Coalition of Hispanic Health and Human Services Organizations

1501 Sixteenth Street, NW • Washington, DC 20036 • (202) 387-5000

December 28, 1995

Arnold P. Wendroff, Ph.D.
Mercury Poisoning Project
544 Eighth Street
Brooklyn, NY 11215

Dear Dr. Wendroff:

Thank you for keeping us informed about your findings regarding use of mercury in the Hispanic communities and the health effects from exposure to mercury vapors. We recently initiated an Indoor Air Pollution Program targeted to Hispanics which will focus on a variety of indoor air pollutants, including mercury.

Raising awareness in Hispanic communities about the health effects of poor indoor air quality and how to prevent indoor air pollution is a long-term process. We are presently gathering information on the indoor air pollution issues to be addressed by the project, and I hope you will continue to share your information on mercury with us.

COSSMHO staff will be in touch with you in the near future regarding possible collaborations on mercury. In the mean time, please feel free to contact Raphael Metzger or Rita Lawrie at (202) 387-5000 if we can be of any assistance

Sincerely,

Jane L. Delgado, Ph.D.

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