

Submission from Japan on dental amalgam

In the decision MC-3/2, the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention (COP), among other things, encouraged Parties to take more than two required measures in accordance with part II of Annex A to the Convention to phase down the use of dental amalgam, and requested the secretariat to collect information on the implementation of any such additional measures taken by Parties.

In addition, the COP requested the secretariat to collect from Parties and others information pursuant to paragraph 7, Article 4 of the Convention, i.e. information including that related to the availability, technical and economic feasibility and environmental and health risks and benefits of the non-mercury alternatives to the product.

Japan hereby submits the implementation of measures in accordance with part II of Annex A to the Convention to phase down the use of dental amalgam and relevant information.

| Provision under the Convention | | Measures and relevant information in Japan |
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| (i) | Setting national objectives aiming at dental caries prevention and health promotion, thereby minimizing the need for dental restoration | "Health Japan 21 (2 nd edition)" published by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare lays out goals related to the health teeth and oral health, including the prevention of tooth loss, increase of infants and school age children who do not have dental caries and increase of the proportion of those who have had a dental checkup over the year. |
| (ii) | Setting national objectives aiming at minimizing its use | — |
| (iii) | Promoting the use of cost-effective and clinically effective mercury-free alternatives for dental restoration | In Japan, dental treatment with dental amalgam has been no longer covered by health insurance since the revision of the medical payment system in April 2016. Mercury-free alternatives for dental restoration have been listed as those covered by health insurance. |
| (iv) | Promoting research and development of quality mercury-free materials for dental restoration | Non-mercury alternatives such as gallium alloy have been developed and already available in Japan. |
| (v) | Encouraging representative professional organizations and dental schools to educate and train dental professionals and students on the use of mercury-free dental restoration alternatives and on promoting best management practices | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ "Model Core Curriculum for Dental Education (FY2016 Revision)" published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology lays out the objective for dental students to learn the cavity restoration with composite resin, glass ionomer cement and metal inlay, but nothing is noted about dental amalgam. ■ The research on metal free materials, such as non- |

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| | | metal prosthesis and fillings, has been ongoing, and relevant academic congress has also been held. |
| (vi) | Discouraging insurance policies and programmes that favour dental amalgam use over mercury-free dental restoration | Dental treatment with dental amalgam has been no longer covered by health insurance since April 2016. |
| (vii) | Encouraging insurance policies and programmes that favour the use of quality alternatives to dental amalgam for dental restoration | Same as above. |
| (viii) | Restricting the use of dental amalgam to its encapsulated form; | Dental amalgam has been rarely used since April 2016. |
| (ix) | Promoting the use of best environmental practices in dental facilities to reduce releases of mercury and mercury compounds to water and land. | — Note: Dental facilities must contract out the transportation and treatment/disposal of waste dental amalgam and issue a manifest to industrial waste management companies who possess appropriate licenses unless dental facilities themselves possess them in order to ensure the environmentally sound management of waste dental amalgam. |
| — | (Additional information) | Dental amalgam is currently not manufactured in Japan. |