

COUNCIL OF
EUROPEAN DENTISTS



NOVEMBER 2009

// CED RESOLUTION

DENTAL AMALGAM



COUNCIL OF EUROPEAN DENTISTS (formerly EU Dental Liaison Committee)
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// INTRODUCTION

The Council of European Dentists (CED) is the representative organisation for the dental profession in the EU, representing over 320,000 practising dentists through 33 national dental associations. Established in 1961 to advise the European Commission on matters relating to the dental profession, the CED promotes high standards of oral healthcare and effective patient-safety centred professional practice across Europe.

// HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

The safety and importance of the continued use of amalgam is supported by the World Dental Federation (FDI) (Consensus Statement, 1997); and by the report from 1998 of the ad hoc dental amalgam working group mandated by the European Commission. The effectiveness and safety of dental amalgam in the restoration of decayed teeth has been demonstrated through long usage. **Research over many decades has failed to show any significant health risk posed by dental amalgam either to patients, dental staff or the public.**

The CED welcomed the adoption, in May 2008 after public consultation, of the report of the EU Scientific Committee on ~~the~~ **Safety of amalgam and alternative dental restorative materials**. The reports confirmed the stance of the CED in regard to dental amalgam and its alternatives concluding that ~~the~~ **dental health can be adequately ensured by both types of material**. All the materials are considered safe to use and they are all associated with very low rates of local adverse effects with no evidence of systemic disease.

// ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The CED also welcomed the adoption, in November 2007, of the report of the EU Scientific Committee on, ~~the~~ **Environmental risks and indirect health effects of mercury in dental amalgam** and but also noted that report stated that ~~the~~ **information presently available does not allow to comprehensively assessing the environmental risks and indirect health effects from use of dental amalgam in the Member States of the EU 25/27.**

The dental profession takes seriously the environmental impact of its members' activities and emphasises that the dental professional has an obligation to work within the legal framework governing mercury containing products. The CED calls on Member States to ensure the full implementation and enforcement of EU waste laws, and fully supports examination into whether this is happening. In most Member States amalgam separators are used and in many they are obligatory. Amalgam separators are an effective way of reducing harmful waste and remove a further 95% from the dental units' existing filtration systems resulting in a total capture of 99%, so preventing waste amalgam entering the waste stream.

The CED also encourages national dental associations to share best practice on waste management and to support their members regarding compliance with waste management obligations.

// USE OF AMALGAM

The worldwide consensus of the dental profession is that amalgam should remain part of the dentist's armoury in order to best meet the needs of patients. It is important that patients must not be denied freedom of choice in respect of how to be treated.

Dental amalgam continues to be the most appropriate filling material for many restorations, due to its ease of use, durability and cost-effectiveness. Dentists are best placed to identify patients' oral health needs. **Restrictions on the use of amalgam would damage the financial stability of health systems** as well as impact on individual patients' ability to afford dental care.

// IMPORTANCE OF PREVENTION

All healthcare interventions carry with them some risk. The CED stresses the **importance of promoting national and targeted prevention programmes for oral health** in order to reduce the need for such interventions.

Adopted unanimously at the CED General Meeting in Brussels on 20 November 2009