

Current level of usage and waste management practices of dental amalgam and mercury free alternatives among dentists in Ireland



This research project has been funded by the EPA Research Programme 2014-2020 in conjunction with Cork University Dental School and Hospital

The Minamata Convention on Mercury

The Minamata Convention on Mercury is concerned with reducing global pollution of the environment with mercury. Any area concerned with the production, use and disposal of products containing mercury are affected. Dental amalgam is one of the areas the Minamata Convention seeks to address and a phase-down of dental amalgam is currently underway.

Dental amalgam is a silver/metal coloured filling material which is made up of mercury and other metal particles, mixed together to form a new compound.

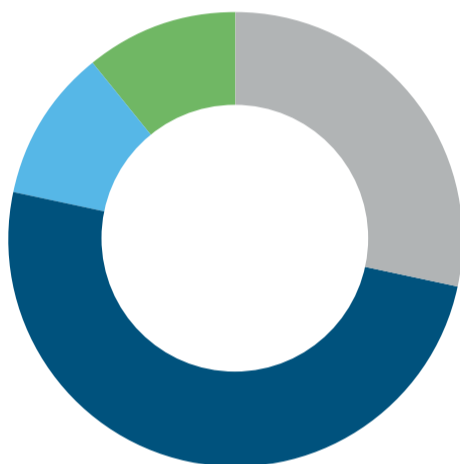
Resin composite is the main mercury free alternative to dental amalgam, it is a plastic tooth coloured filling material.

3,000

There are approximately 3000 dentists registered to work in Ireland.

The average number of restorations placed by dentists per week is 30.

Proportion of which were dental amalgam, resin composite, glass-ionomer cement (GIC), resin-modified glass-ionomer cement (RMGIC)



Proportion of restorations placed which were dental amalgam or mercury-free alternatives

- Resin Composite
- Amalgam
- GIC
- RMGIC

96%

of dentists were aware of the recommended phase-down in the use of dental amalgam.

61%

of dentists felt that the phase down of amalgam is a good idea.

98%

of dentists received clinical training in amalgam placement as part of their dental school training.

67%

of dentists received clinical training in posterior composite placement as part of their dental school training.

25%

of dentists agreed when asked if they felt more confident placing an amalgam filling than a composite filling.

48%

of dentists would be concerned about the prognosis of their restorations if they had to use composite for all posterior restorations.

The Facts



93% of dentists reported having a waste management policy in relation to the disposal of waste amalgam.



78% of dentists reported disposing of all amalgam waste in a dedicated container with a sponge impregnated with a mercury vapour suppressant.



71% of dentists reported having a waste management policy in relation to the disposal of extracted teeth containing amalgam.



87% of dentists reported having an amalgam separator fitted in their practice.



13% of dentists reported knowing how much amalgam the amalgam separator retains.