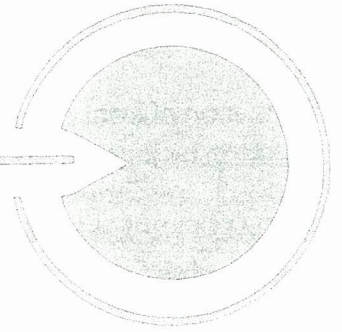


**BIO-PROBE**

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**NEWSLETTER**



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SWEDISH GOVERNMENT  
HEALTH BOARD  
DECLARES  
AMALGAM TOXIC  
AND UNSUITABLE  
AS A  
DENTAL FILLING MATERIAL

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Translation of front page of the Svenska Dagbladet, May 20, 1987  
Reported by Inger Atterstam:

## **SOCIALSTYRELSEN STOPS AMALGAM USE**

(The Swedish Social Welfare and Health Administration)

Amalgam is an unsuitable and toxic dental filling material which shall be discontinued as soon as suitable replacement materials are produced. As a first step, amalgam work in pregnant women will be stopped.

Thus recommended Socialstyrelsen's expert group who had investigated the controversial question of the risk of mercury poisoning from amalgam.

Socialstyrelsen gave their complete support to the experts and made therefore an historic about-face after more than a decade of hot debate.

"We now realize that we have made a mistake", acknowledged division chief Viking Falk at the Socialstyrelsen. "This has caused people to suffer unnecessarily".

Socialstyrelsen's dental experts have led the opposition against the researchers and patients who for many years have fought to have this risk acknowledged.

No one can say how long it will take before the use of amalgam fillings will be banned. Ten years was a guess put forward on Tuesday by the investigating committee.

Inside headline and article:

Socialstyrelsen changes their position

## **DANGEROUS TO USE AMALGAM**

Amalgam is, from a toxicological point of view, an unacceptable dental filling material which shall be discontinued when a suitable dental filling material has been developed.

As a first step in the process to eliminate the use of amalgam in dental fillings, comprehensive amalgam work on pregnant women shall be stopped in order to prevent mercury damage to the fetus.

This historic decision was made in the report by a special investigatory commission on the use of mercury in amalgam, presented on Tuesday. The Socialstyrelsen gave their complete support to the contents of the report. Therefore, a big breakthrough can be marked in the more than decade long and heart-rending conflict over the risk from amalgam.

## **"WE HAVE MADE A MISTAKE"**

We realize now that we have previously made an error in our judgement of this question. Patients have suffered unnecessarily and we will now rectify our mistakes and in different ways try to solve the problem. It means no less than to give patients the best possible treatment, explained Viking Falk from the Socialstyrelsen when the report was presented.

This is an unusual test of the country's leading medical authority and their responsibility, especially against a background that the Socialstyrelsen's dental experts have for many years worked firmly against researchers and patients who have tried to warn of the toxic risk from amalgam.

## **WRONG TRACK**

We got onto the wrong track from the very beginning due to the emphasis on so called oral galvanism, explained the chief of Socialstyrelsen's dental bureau, Hans Sundberg. Furthermore, the most important knowledge in this field has become available only in recent years.

It was in December 1985 that the Socialstyrelsen, after hard political pressure, consented to the expert commission.

## **HEALTH RISKS**

The commission is not dominated by dentists but by the neurologists, i.e., experts on nerve damage. The spokesman has been Professor P.O. Lundberg at the neurology clinic of Uppsala Academic Hospital.

A united investigation disclosed that amalgam fillings give off mercury vapor, especially after chewing, drilling away fillings and filling teeth; this can be objectively measured in the urine. However, it is also stated that the mercury exposure from amalgam is very low and that the number of patients with problems caused by mercury "ought to be" very small.

The right for patients with problems to obtain qualified care and a thorough examination is emphasized. This examination should be by cooperation between dental and medical care.

The experts also suggest a number of measures for the Socialstyrelsen. The most important one is to support extensive research to find suitable replacement materials and then to discontinue amalgam use in Sweden.

A system with obligatory reporting of side effects of dental materials and preclinical testing of all materials is also suggested.

## **MISCARRIAGE INVESTIGATION**

For dental employees, the Workers Protection Agency should investigate mercury risks and give instruction for amalgam use. Health examinations will be made and an investigation of the incidence of miscarriages and deformed children among dental personnel will also be carried out.

Furthermore, the dental health care program for patients with suspected mercury-related complaints will be worked on again.

None of the experts would say precisely how much time is needed to completely eliminate the use of amalgam in Sweden.

The alternatives which exist today, mostly different types of plastic filling materials, do not meet established standards and are also health risks, said Professor P.O. Lundberg.

Although ten years was mentioned as a deadline for amalgam, no one wanted to back that figure.

Professor Mats Hanson from Lund, Chairman of the Dental Patient Organization, is the person who has worked hardest to get amalgam prohibited and who has taken part in the investigation: "We have not reached our goal. I wanted an immediate stop. But, we at least won an important victory today."

**BIO-PROBE COMMENT: The comment made concerning the health risks of plastic filling materials appears to be similar to those previously made about the safety of amalgam fillings and are also unsupportable by the existing scientific research.**