

Letters to the Editor

Letter to the Editor

High Manganese Levels in Milk-Based Infant Formulas

Kamil K. Hozyasz*
*Department of Pediatrics,
Institute of Mother and Child,
ul. Kasprzaka 17a, 01-211 Warsaw, Poland*

Anna Ruszczynska
*Faculty of Chemistry, Warsaw University
Warsaw, Poland*

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Recently, it has been suggested that dietary exposure to high levels of manganese (Mn) during infancy can be neurotoxic to rat pups (Tran et al., 2002a,b). Tran et al. concluded that the influence of soy formulas containing high levels of Mn (about 200–300 µg/L) on human infant remains to be studied.

In 2003, we determined Mn levels with inductively coupled plasma-mass spectrometry (ICP-MS) in cow's milk-based infant formulas recommended from 0 to 2 months of age. The investigated formulas from four manufacturers (Humana Milchunion, Mead Johnson, Nestle, Nutricia) are dispensed in Polish markets and pharmacies without doctor's prescription. Concentrations of Mn were in the following ranges for standard starter formulas, hypoallergenic formulas based on partially hydrolysed cow's milk proteins (HA), and special thickened infant formulas (AR) (in µg/L, without contribution from drinking water): 66–856 ($n = 6$; mean 330 ± 301), 29–173 ($n = 5$; mean 92 ± 52), 89–1152 ($n = 3$; mean 618 ± 531).

Young infants who are not breast-fed are highly dependent on formula diets. Our results showed that not only soy formulas (Lönnerdal, 1997; Tran et al., 2002a) but also some of milk-based formulas need to be considered as a source of high amounts of Mn.

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*Corresponding author. Tel.: +48-22-6328009;
fax: +48-22-6328009.

E-mail address: khozyasz@alpha.net.pl (K.K. Hozyasz).

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Letter to the Editor

Effects of Low-Level Exposure to Inorganic Mercury

Antonio Mutti*
*Department of Clinical Medicine
Nephrology, Health Sciences
University of Parma, Via Gramsci 14
43100 Parma, Italy*

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The article “Application of a latent variable model for a multicenter study on early effects due to mercury exposure” by Lucchini et al. (2003) reports on a survey carried out in the framework of a collaborative project (acknowledged at p. 614). According to the protocol, most mercury (Hg) exposure markers have been measured at the Laboratory of Industrial Hygiene and Toxicology, University of Brescia (Research Unit coordinated by P. Apostoli), while the analysis of renal markers, serum prolactin (PRL) and interleukins (IL) has been centralized at the Laboratory of Industrial Toxicology, University of Parma (Research Unit coordinated by A. Mutti).