



Response to letter from Dr. Gianpaolo Guzzi related to "The Endocrine Effects of Mercury on Humans and Wildlife"

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LETTER

Response to letter from Dr. Gianpaolo Guzzi related to “The Endocrine Effects of Mercury on Humans and Wildlife”

To the Editor:

Dr. Guzzi et al. draw our attention to a pilot paper that truly reflects the subtitle of their paper “Food for Thought.” This paper, although preliminary in its results, nicely complements our article on the endocrine effects of mercury, as it supports the suggestion that mercury of various forms specifically accumulates in the endocrine organs—in this case, in the thyroid gland. Because this was a pilot study with very limited information on the levels of accumulation in the endocrine glands examined, we chose not to include it in our review. However, the results presented are important to note as they demonstrate accumulation of mercury in the pituitary and the thyroid glands in postmortem human subjects ($n = 6$) that had more than 12 dental amalgams. These results do provide “food for

thought” as they point to the need for more studies that examine mercury accumulation in endocrine organs for exposures to the various forms of mercury.

We thank Dr. Guzzi for pointing out the typo in the “Chemical Forms of Hg” section of our review. We did intend to use Hg^o in the referenced location.

We fully agree with Dr. Guzzi that the endocrine system should receive increased attention in studies that explore the effects of mercury exposure on the health of humans and other species.

*Dr. Shirlee Tan, Dr. Jesse Meiller, and
Dr. Kathryn Mahaffey**

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*The authors regretfully note that co-author, Dr. Kathryn R. Mahaffey, has passed away since the drafting of this response. Dr. Mahaffey's contributions to the field were remarkable. She was a wonderful, friend, mentor and champion of public health. She will be greatly missed.