Letter to the Editor

Lead poisoning due to Ayurvedic medicine: how about the risk?

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Dear Editor,

The recent report on “a cluster of lead poisoning among consumers of Ayurvedic medicine” is very interesting.¹ Breeher et al. noted that “there are few regulations addressing contamination of “natural” products or supplements.”¹ Of interest, the present report is the largest case series in US.¹ Indeed, the problem can be seen around the world and the problem might be more common but under-recognized and under-reported. An interesting question is “how about the risk.” To share an idea on this topic, the authors would like to introduce the result from a recent survey in Thailand, a tropical country in Southeast Asia where Ayurveda products are widely used. From a national wide survey, 1 from 205 (0.488%) collected samples have unacceptable lead contamination.² Based on this information, it seems that it is not uncommon to get a chance to have lead poisoning due to intake of local Ayurveda products in Thailand. To find the exact risk, the next concern is on the frequency of local Ayurveda

products among local people. According to a recent report by Wiwanitkit, 0.5% of patients visiting to the primary care center reported concomitant use of Ayurveda products.³ Based on the information on contamination rate and frequency of local Ayurveda products among local people, the possibility of a person will get a lead poisoning due to due to local Ayurvedic product is equal to 0.00244%. This means 2.4 from 100,000 patients have chance to get risk of lead intoxication due to local Ayurveda products in Thailand.

References

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