

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4836
ANSWERED ON:18.12.2009
TOXIC ELEMENTS IN HOSPITALS
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Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether high levels of toxic elements such as mercury has been found in the indoor air of the hospitals in the country as per the study conducted by some environment companies;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and
- (c) the corrective measures taken by the Government to equip hospitals to handle such toxic waste?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD)

(a) & (b): As per a study conducted by Toxics Links (A Non Governmental Organization) published in 2007, there was substantial presence of mercury in ambient air of two hospitals in Delhi and it was higher than the level recommended by the US based "Environmental Protection Agency" and "Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry".

The above mentioned study does not give details of the hospitals, so the reasons cannot be ascertained. However, possible reasons could be:

1. Leakage and spillage of mercury from mercury based equipments like Thermometer and Blood Pressure equipment.
2. Use of mercury in preparation of dental amalgams.

(c) In so far as Central Government Hospitals in Delhi are concerned, these hospitals follow the guidelines laid down in the Bio-Medical Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 1998 as amended from time to time to handle the toxic elements and mercury waste disposal, in the hospitals. However, these hospitals have already taken steps to phase out mercury based equipments gradually.