

An official translation to English of the Norwegian "National Clinical Guideline for the Use of Dental Filling Materials" is now available online at:
<http://www.shdir.no/index.db2?id=11566> - the website of the Norwegian Directorate for Health and Social Welfare.

These guidelines went into effect on July 1, 2003 and have thus been standard practice for almost a year.

On May 13 I circulated an e-mail regarding the extent to which dental amalgam is presently used in Norway. An article recently published in the Journal of the Norwegian Dental Association (Den norske Tannlegeforenings Tidende 2004; 114 no. 6, p 284-286) supports the statement that 90% or more of tooth restorations done during the last few years in Norway were mercury-free alternatives. The article is called "Exit amalgam? Use of amalgam in dental practice in Norway 2002" and may be found at:

http://www.tannlegetidende.no/pls/dntt/pa_dtdm.xpnd?vp_seks_id=96963&b_start=1
(The WHOLE link must be used. It will not work automatically if divided over two lines.)

The results of this study are probably a fairly accurate description of current use in Norway, that is: 10% of adult patients receiving amalgam, and only 3% of fillings for patients under the age of 19.

This study was financed by the Norwegian health authorities as a baseline study before new restrictions on the use of amalgam took effect in Norway on 1 July 2003. The intention is to follow up with a new study after five years.

A SUMMARY OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE GUIDELINE:

- Preventive treatment should be given priority
- Dental tissue-conserving techniques shall always be chosen when dental filling therapy is necessary
- Amalgam should not normally be the first choice for any indication of dental filling therapy
- Use of amalgam should be limited as much as possible in consideration of
 - the environment and possible adverse health effects
- Dental filling therapy should be avoided during pregnancy
- Contact between amalgam and other metals must be avoided when placing new dental fillings
- Allergy to a component of a dental filling material is a contra-indication
 - for use of the material
- Every effort should be made to reduce the exposure of patients and dental health care personnel to chemical substances during dental treatment, both
 - when placing and removing dental fillings
- Water cooling and suction shall be used when removing old dental fillings

- Contact with materials before they are hardened should be avoided

I recommend using the first link above and downloading the pdf-file containing the entire guidelines document. It is well worth reading.

Maryanne Rygg
Norway