

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6819

ANSWERED ON:11.05.2005

PHASING OUT OF MERCURY EQUIPMENTS

Adhalrao Patil Shri Shivaji;Adsul Shri Anandrao Vithoba;Satpathy Shri Tathagata;Verma Shri Ravi Prakash

**Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:**

(a) whether it is a fact that mercury equipment in hospitals may cause serious health problem to the general public if not handled properly and disposed of like general wastes without precaution ;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there is no regulation and safeguards for handling mercury in the hospitals across the country; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by the Government for proper usage and disposal of mercury equipments and its gradual phase out from hospitals ?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE ( SMT. PANABAKA LAKSHMI)

(a) & (b): There are no known cases of health problems resulting from the involvement of mercury in hospitals. The breakage of mercury thermometers may lead to spillage of some mercury which is supposed to be collected as a part of the hospitals health and safety practices.

The disposable of mercury bearing waste, irrespective of the source of generation containing mercury and mercury compounds equal to or greater than 50-mg. per kilogram is required to be disposed of only as per the requirement of the Hazardous Waste (Management and Handling) Rules as amended in May 2003.

It is for the State Pollution Control Boards/Pollution Control Committees to ensure collection/disposal of the mercury/mercury bearing waste in the health care facilities in the respective State/UT as per the provisions of these Rules.

(c) & (d): In so far as the Central Government Hospitals are concerned, they follow the guidelines laid down in the Hazardous Waste (Management and Handling) Rules as amended in May 2003. The mercury waste generated from the broken thermometer, B.P. apparatus, etc., is collected and recycled. The Mercury thermometers/sphygmomanometers used traditionally for measuring body temperature/blood pressure have been replaced in some countries due to environmental concerns. However, in replacement of these instruments, there are also concerns in many countries about the availability, affordability and accuracy of alternative devices.