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UNC Studies Amalgam in Children

Chapel Hill, NC - Dental amalgam fillings pose no threat to children's health, according to a recent study at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill dental school.

The scientists, who focused on North Carolina children, noted that environmental exposure to mercury was low among those studied and, further, that they could detect no additional exposure to mercury from dental work done to primary teeth.

The study, published in the April issue of Pediatric Dentistry, was authored by Dr. Diane Dilley, associate professor of pediatric dentistry at UNC-CH, and James Bawden, former dean of the dental school there.

"We compared primary teeth from children who had had fillings with primary teeth from children without fillings," said Dr. Dilley. "We did find tiny amounts of mercury in the teeth we examined, but statistical analysis showed no correlation between the number of fillings and the amount of mercury present."

"In other words," she continued, "the children we studied not only got very little mercury from their environment, they also got none we could detect from the fillings. They were safe from mercury exposure."