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“CLEANER PRODUCTION INITIATIVES AND CHALLENGES FOR A SUSTAINABLE WORLD”

Elimination of Mercury (Hg) in the Health Sector: the Case of a Hospital in the City of Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico

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Abstract

The objectives of this study were to provide an analysis of policies that are related to the Hg, management practices (acquisition, storage, use and final disposal), as well as the inventory of the sources of Hg in different areas of the hospital and propose actions for the implementation of a cleaner production (CP) program in a hospital in the city of Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico. The data collection instruments were a questionnaire and interview assessment and inventory sheet. With the information gathered and an assessment glass clinical thermometer was selected as the source of the most important Hg. Finally was developed a pilot program of CP for a hospital, to assist in the implementation of alternatives to reduce and / or eliminate Hg.

This case study showed some deficiencies in the hospital, such as lack of employee training, inadequate practices for cleaning up spills, lack of policies for the removal of Hg, the lack of identification of equipment and laboratory chemicals containing Hg. The actions recommended include: promoting the creation of a policy to reduce and/or elimination of Hg, to form a team in the hospital, develop support material for an awareness campaign, training of nursing staff and medical material supply for cleaning spills of Hg, formulate policies for the purchase of mercury-free devices, starting with the replacement of mercury thermometers for digital thermometers. This case is part of Elimination of Mercury project in Ecuador and Mexico Hospitals led by University of Massachusetts Lowell, USA, aims at gradual elimination of mercury from healthcare facilities. Participation in the project is voluntary.

Keywords: *mercury, hospital, pollution prevention, cleaner production.*

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