



June 9, 2000

**Department of
Environmental
Protection**

59-17 Junction Boulevard
Corona, New York
11368-5107

Arnold P. Wendorf, Ph. D.
Mercury Poisoning Project
544 Eighth Street
Brooklyn, NY 11215

Re: Mercury Trackdown Sampling

**Joel A. Miele Sr., P.E.
Commissioner**

Dear Dr. Wendorff:

This is in response to your March 16, 2000 letter requesting that this Department conduct certain wastewater sampling for mercury.

More specifically, you indicated that you are working on the Mercury Poisoning Project concerning the use of mercury for Magico-Religious rituals. As part of your study, you found that mercury is used by some segments of the population by addition to bath water, cleaning water, or ingestion. You believe that this mercury is entering the public sewer system.

This Department is interested in further investigating your conclusions, and will include a wastewater sampling study for mercury as outlined in your March 16th letter in our next headworks analysis. We will work this sampling effort into our sampling schedule and anticipate conducting the sampling within the next six months to one year.

Members of my staff will be in contact with you once we have identified proposed geographic area for the study and control areas. Your input on this matter would be appreciated.

If you have any questions, please telephone Robert LaGrotta P.E., Esq., Chief, Division of Pollution Prevention and Monitoring at (718) 595-4978.

We appreciate your time and effort on this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Robert E. Adamski, P.E.
Deputy Commissioner
Director
Bureau of Wastewater Treatment



www.ci.nyc.ny.us/dep

(718) DEP-HELP

Log# WP00033

From: "Lopez, Xiomara" <xiomara@dep.nyc.gov>
To: <mercurywendroff@mindspring.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 16, 2002 9:12 AM
Subject: Sampling Sites for Ritualistic Mercury in Sewage

Dear Dr. Wendroff:

How are you? I hope well. I would like you to send me an e-mail with the neighborhoods you deem appropriate to sample. I spoke to my supervisor and he will like to narrow the possibilities as much as we can to make a good use of the city resources.

Thank you for your effort.

Sincerely,

Xiomara Lopez

From: "Arnold Wendroff" <mercurywendroff@mindspring.com>
To: <clyde@mec.cuny.edu>; <LAFEP@aol.com>; "Morri Markowitz" <markowit@aecom.yu.edu>;
<pozuah@montefiore.org>; "Nancy Jeffery" <njeffery@health.nyc.gov>;
<Maddaloni.Mark@epamail.epa.gov>; "Christopher D'Andrea" <cdandrea@health.nyc.gov>;
<mmason@cwaha.org>; "Rubin, Carol" <chr1@cdc.gov>; <xiomara@dep.nyc.gov>;
<sbcac@earthlink.net>
Sent: Wednesday, January 16, 2002 9:46 AM
Subject: Fw: Sampling Sites for Ritualistic Mercury in Sewage

Dear Colleagues,

The NYC Department of Environmental Protection is apparently going through with its promise to test my hypothesis that wastewater in some Caribbean and Hispanic neighborhoods contains elevated levels of mercury as a result of the magico-religious and ethnomedical uses of elemental mercury as well as the disposal of that mercury down drains.

Each of you has some knowledge and expertise in this area. If you have any suggestions as to specific neighborhoods for DEP to study, please contact Ms. Lopez directly, or contact me.

I especially urge our two medical colleagues, who have an ongoing clinical and environmental mercury monitoring study, to suggest sites in the Bronx that would provide data supportive to their study, and to the projected CDC study to begin in the Spring.

Sincerely yours,

Arnie Wendroff

PS You may be interested in the findings and recommendations of New Jersey's Mercury Task Force. It addresses the "Cultural Uses of Mercury." see www.state.nj.us/dep/dsr/mercury_task_force.htm for details.

From: "Marian SBCAC" <sbcac@earthlink.net>
To: "Arnold Wendroff" <mercurywendroff@mindspring.com>; <clyde@mec.cuny.edu>; <LAFEP@aol.com>; "Morri Markowitz" <markowit@aecom.yu.edu>; <pozuah@montefiore.org>; "Nancy Jeffery" <njeffery@health.nyc.gov>; <Maddaloni.Mark@epamail.epa.gov>; "Christopher D'Andrea" <cdandrea@health.nyc.gov>; <mmason@cwha.org>; "Rubin, Carol" <chr1@cdc.gov>; <xiomara@dep.nyc.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, January 16, 2002 2:09 PM
Subject: Re: Sampling Sites for Ritualistic Mercury in Sewage

Ms. Lopez and Dr. Wendroff-- I find your idea of doing wastewater sampling for ritual mercury curious. First, ritual mercury is relatively expensive, used sparingly, and I believe much more likely to be found having adhered to the structures and furnishings of the house than down the drain, not to mention the dilution in the sewer system of our high-density neighborhoods. Our DEP resources would be put to much better use by the periodic testing of the wastewater emitted by hospitals and medical schools, which are very sloppy about how they dispose of mercury, which goes down the drain from hundreds of lab chemicals, broken mercury-containing medical devices, and dental amalgam.

Marian Feinberg
South Bronx Clean Air Coalition
541-549 E 138th Street
Bronx, NY 10454
718-742-5770 FAX 742-5772
sbcac@earthlink.net

Does SBCAC also believe that the CDC should not be spending taxpayer money on its upcoming pediatric urine mercury studies in the Bronx and in Chicago?

I suggest that the SBCAC has known of these magico-religious mercury exposures for almost a decade. I personally met with its President, Carlos Padilla, and he seemed concerned about pediatric and maternal mercury exposures. However, SBCAC did no advocacy on this issue. Why? Why is SBCAC now taking federal money from NIEHS to do "outreach" on ritualistic mercury exposure in the Bronx?

What has and what is SBCAC doing to protect the Hispanic and Caribbean population of New York City from mercury exposures in their homes?

Sincerely yours

Arnold Wendroff

Mercury Poisoning Project

(718) 499-8336



**Department of
Environmental
Protection**

59-17 Junction Boulevard
Corona, New York
11368-5107

**Joel A. Miele Sr., P.E.
Commissioner**

**Alfonso R. Lopez, P.E.
Deputy Commissioner**

**Bureau of Wastewater
Treatment**

Tel (718) 595-5050
Fax (718) 595-6950
AlfonsoL@dep.nyc.gov

March 26, 2002

Mr. Arnold P. Wendroff, Ph. D.
Mercury Poisoning Project
544 Eighth Street
Brooklyn, NY 11215

Re: Headworks Sampling

Dear Mr. Wendroff:

This is in response to your March 15, 2002 fax, and to confirm our prior telephone conversation.

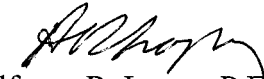
DEP is in the process of conducting a headworks analysis for the wastewater influent to its Wastewater Treatment Plants. In prior correspondence and discussions with you, DEP indicated an interest in conducting sampling to determine the potential sources of mercury in the wastewater influent. Particularly, you indicated that Religious/Cultural uses may be such a source of mercury.

DEP has utilized its engineering expertise to maximize the effectiveness of its headworks sampling in the evaluation of not only mercury, but an additional nine heavy metals found in wastewater. DEP has recently consulted with the New York Academy of Sciences (the Academy) which is now finalizing its research project entitled "Pollution Prevention and Management Strategies for Mercury in the NY/NJ Harbor - Suggested Priorities, Recommendations and Strategies." The draft Academy study indicates that the following sectors' contribution of mercury to wastewater: dental facilities 41%, hospitals 25%, laboratories 14%, household products 11%, Religious/Cultural 6%, and household thermometers 3%.

At this time, DEP has established its Headworks sampling agenda to utilize the available resources in the most efficient and productive manner. In light of the recent Academy study that has provided new information, indicating far larger sources of mercury in wastewater that require sampling (for example, dental facilities' contribution of 41%), DEP does not anticipate sampling Religious/Cultural uses at this time.

DEP appreciates your interest and input in this matter.

Very truly yours,


Alfonso R. Lopez, P.E.
Deputy Commissioner

RLG/cg



www.nyc.gov/dep

(718) DEP-HELP