

アメリカにおける魚介類各種の水銀レベル

下記の表は様々な魚類と甲殻類の水銀レベルの平均と範囲を表したものである。

表1

高水銀レベルの魚

種	SPECIES	平均(ppm)	範囲(ppm)	検体数
アマダイ	Tilefish	1.45	0.65-3.73	60
カジキ	Swordfish	1.00	0.10-3.22	598
サワラ	King Mackerel	0.73	0.30-1.67	213
サメ	Shark	0.96	0.05-4.54	324

表2

低い水銀レベルの魚介類

種	SPECIES	平均(ppm)	範囲(ppm)	検体数
ハタ(Mycteroperca)	Grouper	0.43	0.05-1.35	64
マグロ(生鮮、冷凍)	Tuna	0.32	ND-1.30	191
アメリカロブスター	Lobster Northern	0.31	0.05-1.31	88
ハタ(Epinephelus)	Grouper	0.27	0.19-0.33	48
カレイ	Halibut	0.23	0.02-0.63	29
ギンダラ	Sablefish	0.22	ND-0.70	102
タラ	Pollock	0.20	ND-0.78	107
マグロ(缶詰)	Tuna	0.17	ND-0.75	248
ソフトシェルクラブ	Crab Blue	0.17	0.02-0.50	94
ダンジネスクラブ	Crab Dungeness	0.18	0.02-0.48	50
ズワイガニ	Crab Tanner	0.15	ND-0.38	55
タラバガニ	Crab King	0.09	0.02-0.24	29
ホタテガイ	Scallop	0.05	ND-0.22	66
ナマズ	Cat Fish	0.07	ND-0.31	22
サケ(生鮮、冷凍、缶詰)	Salmon	ND	ND-0.18	52
カキ	Oysters	ND	ND-0.25	33
エビ	Shrimps	ND	ND	22

表3

限られたサンプリング数での水銀レベル

表3のデータは限られたサンプル数をもとにしており、それゆえに不確実性が高い

種	SPECIES	平均(ppm)	範囲(ppm)	検体数
センネンダイ*	Red Snapper	0.60	0.07-1.46	10
マカジキ	Marlin	0.47	0.25-0.92	13
マンボウ	Moonfish	0.60	0.60	1
オレンジラフィー	Orange Roughy	0.58	0.42-0.76	9
スズキ	Bass Saltwater	0.49	0.10-0.91	9
マス	Trout Freshwater	0.42	1.22(max)	NA
青魚	Blue Fish	0.30	0.20-0.40	2
ニベ科	Croaker	0.28	0.18-0.41	15
海水マス	Trout Seawater	0.27	ND-1.19	4
マダラ(太西洋)*	Cod(Atlantic)	0.19	ND-0.33	11
マヒマヒ	Mahi Mahi	0.19	0.12-0.25	15
パーチ科(海水産)*	Ocean Perch	0.18	ND-0.31	10
モンツキ(大西洋)	Haddock	0.17	0.07-0.37	10
ホワイトフィッシュ	White Fish	0.16	ND-0.31	2
ニシン	Herring	0.15	0.016-0.28	8
ヨーロッパロブスター*	Spiny Lobster	0.13	ND-0.27	8
パーチ科(海水産)	Perch Freshwater	0.11	0.10-0.31	4
パーチ科(海水産)	Perch Saltwater	0.10	0.10-0.15	6
カレイ	Flounder/Sole	0.04	ND-0.18	17
二枚貝*	Clams	ND	ND	6
テラピニア	Tilapia	ND	ND	8

*国内のシーフードマーケットで最も売れている種類

メチル水銀データの調査元

FDA データベース FY85-99

EPA 水銀調査レポート(国会(?))に提出したもの

メキシコ湾漁場における水銀の実態調査(2000)

NMF 1976,1978 レポート

イギリスにおける魚類と甲殻類の水銀レベル

最近の調査

前回の調査

種	SPECIES	平均(mg/kg)	範囲	検体数	種	SPECIES	平均(mg/kg)	範囲	検体数
魚類					海水魚				
カレイ	Halibut	0.290	0.038-0.617	2	マダラ	Cod	0.066	0.029-0.098	10
ホキ	Hoki	0.186	0.065-0.307	8	モンツキ	Haddock	0.043	0.023-0.072	25
アンコウ	Monkfish	0.198	0.096-0.300	2	ニシン	Herring	0.091	0.044-0.13	9
オレンジラフィー	Orengé Roughy	0.595	0.527-0.647	6	サバ	Mackerel	0.054	0.024-0.10	14
その他	Other	0.105	0.006-0.664	12	アカ(ツノ)カレイ	Plaice	0.056	0.029-0.086	15
タラ	Pollack	0.012	0.007-0.020	4	レッドフィッシュ	Red Fish	0.12	0.12-0.12	2
サケ	Salmon	0.050	0.029-0.079	14	タラの類	Whiting	0.14	0.029-0.26	15
シーバス	Sea Bass	0.065	0.030-0.094	4	タラの類	Cod fish fingers	0.016	0.006-0.025	3
マダイ	Sea Bream	0.053	0.051-0.056	4	甲殻類				
サメ	Shark	1.521	1.006-2.200	5	メキシコブラウン	Brown shrimps	0.065	0.061-0.068	2
マカジキ	Marlin	1.091	0.409-2.204	4	イシガキガイ	Cockles	0.026	0.013-0.046	3
メカジキ	Swordfish	1.355	0.153-2.706	17	カニ	Crab	0.092	0.051-0.13	2
マス	Trout	0.060	0.014-0.103	14	ロブスター	Lobster	0.29	0.15-0.49	4
マグロ	Tuna	0.401	0.141-1.500	34	ムールガイ	Mussels	0.063	0.028-0.11	4
甲殻類					アマエビ	Pink Shrimps	0.089	0.079-0.099	2
外国産エビ	Exotic prawns	0.025	0.006-0.047	14	セイヨウイタヤガイ	Queen Scallops	0.017	0.016-0.018	2
ロブスター	Lobster	0.075	0.009-0.231	4	イカ	Squid	0.040	0.016-0.058	3
ムール貝	Mussel	0.030	0.017-0.041	4	ホタテガイ	Scallops	0.010	0.008-0.011	3
その他	Other	0.038	0.003-0.186	9	クルマエビ	Scampi	0.11	0.11-0.12	2
エビ	Prawns	0.048	0.013-0.249	14	タマキビガイ	Winkles	0.037	0.026-0.049	4
イカ	Squid	0.011	0.003-0.036	9					

調査元: Bristol大学の調査

「輸入魚類と甲殻類およびイギリスの養殖魚とそれらの製品」(非公表)

調査元: FSIS 151

「海水魚と甲殻類における金属およびその他の物質の生物濃縮」

1998年5月

平成15年1月16日
厚生労働省食品保健部
南担当 監視 道野、美上 (内2477)

鯨由来食品のPCB・水銀の汚染実態調査結果について

鯨由来食品中のPCB・水銀の汚染実態調査等に関して、平成13年度厚生科学特別研究「鯨由来食品の有害化学物質によるヒト健康に及ぼす影響に関する研究」(主任研究者:豊田正武国立医薬品食品衛生研究所食品部長:当時)の調査結果がまとまった。その概要等は下記の通りである。

記

1 汚染実態調査の結果

- (1)一般市場に流通している鯨由来食品の大半(50%以上)を占める南極海ミンククジラ等ヒゲクジラ類のPCB・水銀濃度は低く、
- (2)汚染濃度は鯨の種類や部位により大きく異なるが、ハクジラ類(ツチクジラ、イシイルカ等)の脂皮、肝臓等には濃度の高いものがあつた。

表1. 鯨類の汚染実態調査結果の要約

部位	PCBs (ppm)				総水銀 (ppm)				メチル水銀 (ppm)				
	平均	最小	最大	検体数	平均	最小	最大	検体数	平均	最小	最大	検体数	
ツチクジラ (三陸沖、ホークツ海)	筋肉	0.14	0.07	0.24	5	1.2	0.44	2.6	5	0.70	0.37	1.3	5
	脂皮	7.1	5.0	11.5	5	0.40	0.05	0.71	5	0.04	0.01	0.10	5
	心臓	0.05	0.05	0.05	2	0.66	0.58	0.73	2	0.39	0.38	0.40	2
	肝臓	0.09	0.08	0.09	2	1.4	1.1	2.1	2	0.23	0.17	0.28	2
	小腸	0.05	0.03	0.06	2	0.37	0.27	0.46	2	0.07	0.05	0.09	2
ハンドウイルカ (紀州沖)	筋肉	0.65	0.05	1.2	5	2.1	1.0	3.7	5	6.6	0.61	9.7	5
	脂皮	2.1	0.83	4.7	5	4.0	0.36	7.9	5	1.4	0.25	2.5	5
	肝臓	0.80	0.06	1.7	4	4.6	0.93	8.0	4	5.0	0.8	7.5	4
	腸管	0.17	0.01	0.43	5	1.3	0.52	2.6	5	2.9	0.28	4.9	5
	肺臓	0.67	0.03	2.5	5	3.2	0.49	6.8	5	2.0	0.24	3.6	5
イシイルカ* (捕獲水域不明)	筋肉	0.26	0.02	0.66	4	1.0	0.74	1.2	4	0.37	0.02	0.67	4
	脂皮	5.2	2.9	6.6	4	0.45	0.31	0.72	4	0.11	0.09	0.13	4
コビレゴンドウ* (捕獲水域不明)	筋肉	0.74	0.09	1.6	4	7.1	4.7	8.9	4	1.5	0.45	2.3	4
	脂皮	8.0	0.27	25	4	4.6	2.4	8.9	3	0.44	0.28	0.75	3
ミンククジラ (南極海)	筋肉	0.0002	0.00008	0.0003	3	0.027	0.003	0.07	227	NA	NA	NA	NA
	脂皮	0.058	0.023	0.11	3	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	腎臓	NA	NA	NA	NA	0.045	0.004	0.33	228	NA	NA	NA	NA
ミンククジラ (北西太平洋)	筋肉	0.03	0.005	0.06	4	0.20	0.0	0.83	638	0.12	0.017	0.19	40
	脂皮	1.8	0.29	4.9	17	0.0	<0.01	0.06	15	NA	NA	NA	NA
	腎臓	NA	NA	NA	NA	0.8	0.01	4.1	638	0.04	0.004	0.08	40
ニタリクジラ (北西太平洋)	筋肉	0.02	0.001	0.01	3	0.05	0.004	0.1	93	0.03	0.001	0.04	43
	脂皮	0	0.03	0.21	3	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	腎臓	NA	NA	NA	NA	0.22	0.01	0.77	93	0.01	0.001	0.009	43
マッコウクジラ (北西太平洋)	筋肉	0.08	0.02	0.15	3	2.1	0.9	4.6	13	0.7	0.45	1.1	5
	脂皮	1.7	1.1	2.0	3	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
	腎臓	NA	NA	NA	NA	6.0	3.6	25.0	13	1.1	0.53	1.6	5

*: DNA分析により決定したもの

NA: 未分析

(注)ヒゲクジラ類:ミンククジラ、ニタリクジラなど

ハクジラ類:ツチクジラ、ハンドウイルカ、イシイルカ、コビレゴンドウ、マッコウクジラなど

表2. 市場調査サンプルからのランダムサンプルの分析結果の要約(2000-2001年の2回分の合計)

鯨種*	部位	PCBs (ppm)				総水銀 (ppm)				メチル水銀 (ppm)			
		平均	最小	最大	検体数	平均	最小	最大	検体数	平均	最小	最大	検体数
ミンククジラ (南極海)	赤肉	0.01*	n.d.	0.01	14	0.03	0.01	0.04	14	0.02*	n.d.	0.03	14
	畝須/ベーコン	0.04*	n.d.	0.07	8	0.01*	n.d.	0.02	8	0.01*	n.d.	0.01	8
	脂皮(塩漬け)	0.04	0.02	0.05	3	n.d.			3	n.d.			3
	尾羽(オバイケ)	n.d.			1	n.d.			1	n.d.			1
	内臓(胃袋)	0.03			1	n.d.			1	n.d.			1
ミンククジラ (北西太平洋)	赤肉	0.08			1	0.08			1	0.04			1
ニタリクジラ (北西太平洋)	赤肉	n.d.			1	0.04			1	0.03			1
ツチクジラ (北西太平洋)	脂皮(塩漬け)	6.0	5.3	6.6	2	0.40	0.28	0.51	2	0.04	0.03	0.05	2
イシイルカ (北西太平洋)	赤肉	0.21	0.14	0.27	2	1.3	1.2	1.3	2	0.60	0.49	0.70	2

*: DNA分析により決定したもの

網掛け: 暫定的規制値を超える数値

出典: 「鯨由来食品の有害化学物質によるヒト健康に及ぼす影響に関する研究」(平成13年度厚生科学特別研究)

(参考)総括報告書の「E. まとめ」(抜粋)

- ・わが国には古来より鯨を食べる食文化が定着しており、国民全体から見た鯨の摂取量は魚介類と比べ1g以下と極めて少ない。
- ・鯨肉は高蛋白質、低脂肪で、アミノ酸スコアも高く、低アレルギーであり、また含硫アミノ酸や鉄含量が多く、さらにその脂質は低コレステロールで、不飽和脂肪酸が多く含まれ必須脂肪酸も多い。
- ・鯨の PCB 及び水銀による汚染濃度は、鯨の種類や部位による違いが極めて大きく、規制値を超えているものもあることから、より詳細な調査の下に食用に適切な種類と部位あるいは不適当な種類と部位を明らかにする必要がある。
- ・生原料としてのミンククジラなどヒゲクジラ類の赤肉は PCB 及び水銀汚染も少なく、食用できると考えられるが、特にハクジラ類の皮部や内臓は汚染が多く、食用とするには何らかの摂食指導が必要と考えられる。
- ・鯨は加工品として食べられることが多いが、加工品にも PCB あるいは水銀汚染濃度の高いものが見られる。加工処理の汚染への影響を調べた結果、水銀濃度は加工によりほとんど変化しないが、PCB 濃度はサラシ加工で減少することが明らかとなり、PCB 濃度の減少にサラシ加工は有用である。
- ・鯨多食者、妊婦、新生児、乳幼児、子供等のハイリスク群については、摂食制限の必要のある鯨食品があればその必要根拠を開示する等の科学的な安全性の対策を取る等鯨の摂取についての注意喚起や摂食指導が必要である。
- ・鯨の種類、捕獲地域によって PCB、水銀による汚染が大きく異なることから、鯨全体に対して一律の摂取制限等を設定するのは合理的ではないため、ハイリスク群である妊婦や小児については、摂食制限の必要のある鯨食品があればその情報を開示するとともに当該鯨食品の摂取を控えることを提案する。
- ・市販の鯨製品については鯨の種類や名称等に不適切な場合が多くみられることから、表示の改善を強く指導すべきである。

2 厚生労働省の今後の対応

- (1) 鯨類(特にハクジラ類)については、農林水産省と連携してさらに汚染実態調査を行う。
- (2) 妊産婦、若齢者、鯨類を含む魚介類多食者に関しては、魚介類についての汚染実態調査に基づく水銀摂取量の推計を行う。
- (3) これらの調査結果等を踏まえて、適切な食事指導の内容等必要な方策について検討する。
- (4) 農林水産省と連携して、鯨由来食品について鯨の種類と捕獲海域が表示されるよう指導する。



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TOTAL MERCURY INTAKE FROM FISH AND SHELLFISH BY JAPANESE PEOPLE

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ABSTRACT

Elevated mercury concentrations have been reported in fish in recent years. Japanese people eat a great deal of raw fishes and shellfishes as "Sashimi" and "Sushi". The action level of large predatory fish such as tuna with total mercury levels exceeding the Japanese maximum permitted limit of 0.4 ppm is exempted from regulation in Japan. Therefore, current total mercury intake from fish and shellfish of Japanese people is unknown. The purpose of this investigation was to estimate the total mercury intake from fish and shellfish. It was found that the mean total mercury concentration of 1.11 ppm in tuna of eatable base as Sashimi or Sushi was clearly higher than the normal level. The mean total mercury intake from fish and shellfish was 0.17mg per capita per week. According to the hypothesis that 75% of total mercury in fish and shellfish is methylmercury, the weekly intake of 0.13 mg as methylmercury was corresponding amount to about 74% of provisional tolerable weekly intake 0.17 mg of methylmercury set by the Welfare Ministry of Japan. ©1997 Elsevier Science Ltd

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, elevated mercury concentrations have been reported in fish in several countries (1-3). Mercury in fish occurs almost entirely as methylmercury in muscle tissue, where it is associated with protein sulfhydryl groups. Fish consumption is the primary pathway of human exposure to methylmercury. Methylmercury is highly toxic. The Japanese mean consumption of fish and shellfish is about 100g (eatable base) per capita per day. In particular, Japanese people eat a great deal of raw fishes and shellfishes as "Sashimi" and "Sushi". Slices of raw fishes are called Sashimi in Japanese. Sushi is rice cakes covering raw fish or rolled in seaweed and

sprinkled with vinegar. The mean fish consumption is over 5 meals (about 100 g as main dish at a meal) of sliced raw fishes per week among Japanese people living near the sea. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has set an Action Level of 1 ppm (wet weight) for concentration of mercury in fish. Fish containing concentrations of mercury above this level are considered to be hazardous for human consumption and cannot be sold in interstate commerce. In Japan, fish containing total mercury concentrations exceeding the Japanese maximum permitted limit of 0.4 ppm (wet base, as Hg) is commonly considered unsuitable for human consumption. Large predatory long-lived marine species such as tuna and swordfish show frequently mercury concentrations higher than 1 ppm (wet base, as Hg) and almost all of it is methylmercury (4, 5). However, large predatory fishes (*Thunnidae*, *Xiphias gladius*, *Katsuwonus pelamis*, *et al.*) with total mercury levels exceeding the Japanese Provisional Action Level of 0.4 ppm for fish and shellfish were exempted from regulation providing the Action Level in July, 1973, in Japan. Therefore, from 1976 to this day, the official inspection on mercury concentration in fish and shellfish has not been reported in the public research institutes. Therefore, current total mercury intake of Japanese people from fish and shellfish is unknown. The purpose of this investigation is to estimate the total mercury intake from fish and shellfish.

SAMPLING AND ANALYTICAL METHODS

Raw fish and shellfish of eatable base available in the market at Tokyo and its surrounding areas was used as samples for mercury investigation. Samples were collected during the one-year period from April, 1996 to March, 1997.

Total mercury contents in fish and shellfish samples were determined by using a cold flameless atomic absorption method. Namely, one sample of about 10 mg was placed on a boat in an electric furnace pre-heated at 700°C and was heated at 700°C for 6 minutes to vaporize mercury. Vaporized mercury was collected in a trap tube. The trap tube was rapidly heated for 5 minutes at 650°C to release mercury and to carry released mercury from the tube to a cold flameless atomic absorption spectrophotometer. Detection limit by this analytical method is 0.01 ng and reproducibility in 1-10 ng contents is $\pm 1\%$.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Total mercury concentrations in fish and shellfish of eatable base

The total mercury concentrations in fish and shellfish of 28 species, 360 samples (eatable base) collected from markets during the one-year are showed in Table 1. Mercury concentrations were quite variable, depending on fish species and sizes. Large fishes such as tuna and swordfish presented the highest mercury concentrations among the fish and shellfish collected, with 93% of tuna, with 100% of swordfish and with 33% (120 samples) of all samples presented concentrations higher than the Japanese maximum permissible total mercury limit of 0.4 ppm set by the Health Organization of Japanese Welfare Ministry for human consumption. In 1975, the mean

total mercury concentrations in tuna and swordfish by the statistical report of the Japanese Prime Minister's Office were 0.60 ppm and 0.80 ppm respectively. A comparison of the results, obtained in 1975 and 1996, suggests that total mercury concentrations in these fishes are increasing, particularly in large predatory species.

Table 1 Total mercury concentrations in fish and shellfish of eatable base

Fish and shellfish species: <i>Scientific name</i>	Number of samples	Range (ppm)	Mean (ppm)	Eatable condition	Cases exceeding 0.4ppm (%)
Tuna: <i>Thunnus thynnus</i>	58	0.36-5.25	1.11	Raw	93
Swordfish: <i>Xiphias gladius</i>	34	1.15-3.01	1.82	Roast	100
Bonito: <i>Katsuwonus pelamis</i>	18	0.12-0.41	0.25	Raw	11
Yellow tail: <i>Seriola dorsalis</i>	6	0.20-0.22	0.21	Boiled	0
Young yellow tail	8	0.06-0.76	0.26	Raw	25
Seabass: <i>Seriola purpurascens</i>	6	0.04-0.37	0.20	Raw	0
Salmon: <i>Onchorhynchus</i>	32	<0.01-1.26	0.19	Roast	13
Salmon roe	4	1.30-1.97	1.64	Salted raw	100
Mackerel: <i>Scomber scombrus</i>	4	0.11-0.43	0.27	Roast	50
Herring: <i>Clupea pallasii</i>	2	0.42-0.66	0.54	Roast	100
Saurel: <i>Trachurus symmetricus</i>	6	0.01-0.72	0.32	Roast	33
Conger: <i>Conger conger</i>	6	0.07-0.42	0.21	Boiled	33
Cod: <i>Gadus callarias</i>	8	0.01-0.07	0.04	Boiled	0
Cod roe	4	0.10-1.14	0.62	Salted raw	50
Flatfish: <i>Heterosomata</i>	8	0.07-0.26	0.20	Roast	0
Smelt: <i>Osmerus eperlanus</i>	8	<0.01-1.25	0.51	Roast	50
Sardine: <i>Sardina pilchardus</i>	20	<0.01-0.10	0.01	Roast	0
Cutlassfish: <i>Trichiurus lepturus</i>	12	0.20-0.33	0.25	Roast	0
Seabream: <i>Archosagus rhomboidalis</i>	8	0.08-0.37	0.17	Roast	0
Pacific saury: <i>Cololabis saira</i>	10	<0.01-0.07	0.04	Roast	0
Atka mackerel: <i>Pleurogrammus azonus</i>	4	<0.01-0.16	0.08	Roast	0
Cuttlefish: <i>Sepia officinalis</i>	20	<0.01-0.88	0.15	Raw	10
Octopus: <i>Octopoda</i>	10	<0.01-0.20	0.04	Raw	0
Prawn: <i>Palaemon serratus</i>	22	<0.01-1.31	0.23	Raw	9
Scallop: <i>Pecten irradians</i>	20	<0.01-0.46	0.09	Raw	10
Turban shell: <i>Turbo cornutus</i>	6	0.01-0.06	0.03	Roast	0
Ark shell: <i>Arcidae</i>	8	<0.01-0.04	0.03	Raw	0
Abalone: <i>Haliotidae</i>	6	0.01-0.04	0.03	Raw	0
King crab: <i>Paralithodes camtschatica</i>	2	0.01	0.01	Raw	0

Total mercury intake from foods by Japanese people

Changes of total mercury intake from food are shown in Table 2. The data in 1975 were quoted from an estimate by Fujii (6). The data in 1996 represent the results of our analyses. A comparison of the results obtained in 1975 and 1996, although the intakes of total food were nearly constant, the intake of fish and shellfish in 1996 increased by 1.7 times greater than that of 1975, and the mean total mercury concentrations in fish and shellfish also increased by 1.5 times. Therefore, the total mercury intakes from food and fish and

shellfish increased by 1.14 and 2.48 times respectively. The ratio of total mercury intake from fish and shellfish in 1975 was about 45% of total mercury intake from all foods, but the ratio in 1996 is over 97%.

Table 2. Change of mean total mercury intake from food of Japanese people per capita per day

	1975			1996		
	A daily mean intake of food (g)	Mean mercury content (ppm)	Mean total mercury intake (μ g)	A daily mean intake of food (g)	Mean mercury content (ppm)	Mean total mercury intake (μ g)
Total fishes and shellfishes	95.6	0.101	9.70	163.3	0.148	24.09
Tuna, Swordfish, Bonito	5.7	0.600	3.42	8.8	1.19	10.46
Other fishes	34.5	0.079	2.71	33.1	0.256	8.49
Cuttlefish, Octopus, Crustacea	16.7	0.037	0.61	22.6	0.152	3.44
Other marine products	38.7	0.076	2.96	98.8	0.050	1.70
Cereals	395	0.0097	3.85	359	0.0008	0.28
Vegetables and fruits	621	0.0088	5.44	576	0.0004	0.21
Meats, Eggs, Dairy products	200	0.011	2.10	247	0.0006	0.16
Others	65	0.0078	0.51	45	0.00004	0.002
Total intake of food and mercury per capita per day	1,377	0.016	21.65	1,326	0.019	24.74

Methylmercury intake from food

In the present study, methylmercury in food was not determined. However, from the aspects of environmental toxicology and food chain impacts, methylmercury is important. Fish consumption is the primary of human exposure to methylmercury. Mercury in fish occurs almost entirely as methylmercury in muscle tissue, where it is associated with protein sulfhydryl groups. Ingestion of fish muscle is an important exposure pathway of mercury to humans. Methylmercury is highly toxic. It is thought to inhibit enzyme activity in the cerebellum, which is responsible for neuron growth in early developmental stages. Chronic exposure to organomercurials can result in mental retardation (7). As a result, the Japanese Welfare Ministry has set an Action Level of 0.3 ppm for concentration of methylmercury in fish and shellfish, that is 75 % of the Japanese maximum permitted limit of total mercury 0.4 ppm. According to the hypothesis that 75 % of total mercury in fish and shellfish and 10 % of total mercury in other food groups are methylmercury, total methylmercury intakes from food and, fish and shellfish were estimated at 18.13 μ g (as Hg) and 18.07 μ g (as Hg, correspond to 99.6 % in total methylmercury in food) per capita per day respectively.

On the other hand, the Health Organization of Japanese Welfare Ministry has set intake limit of total mercury as 0.25 mg and methylmercury as 0.17mg per an adult weighing 50 kg. Namely, the weekly intake of 0.126 mg

($0.018\text{mg} \times 7\text{day}$) as methylmercury per capita is corresponding amount to about 74 % of the provisional tolerable weekly intake 0.17 mg.

Also, the administration limit of methylmercury can be showed by the following experimental equation (6):

Acceptable daily intake \times biological half time (BHT) $\times 1.44 = 0.17(\text{mg}) \div 7(\text{day}) \times 70(\text{day}) \times 1.44 = 2.5(\text{mg})$.

Accordingly, the mean administration value of methylmercury of Japanese people is $0.018 \times 70 \times 1.44 = 1.8\text{mg}$. This value corresponds to about 72 % of the administration limit of methylmercury.

If one consumes 100 g (the normal diet at a meal) of tuna as Sashimi containing a total of 1.11 ppm mercury which is 2.8 times the Japanese maximum permitted limit of total mercury 0.4 ppm for human consumption, then this 111 μg Hg (almost all of it is methylmercury) can be estimated at 11 mg as administration value in the equation described above. If one consumes 200 g of tuna, then this 22 mg of methylmercury containing in tuna is very close to the administration limit 25 mg of minimum threshold value in methylmercury poisoning (8). It may be a significant body load and an important human health risk. Because this high level from human consumption of large fish is a daily occurrence in Japan, and is not subject to any effective means of reduction other than eliminating favorite foods from national diets. Further studies are needed to elucidate these phenomena, that is, detailed epidemiological information such as eating habits and amounts of fish and their species commonly consumed should be more deeply investigated in Japanese people.

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