Perchlorate Exposure and Thyroid Hormone Levels in the US Population: NHANES 2001 – 2002

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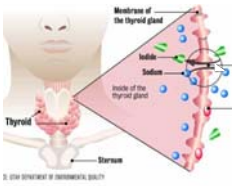
"The findings and conclusions in this presentation have not been formally disseminated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and do not represent any agency determination or policy."

Perchlorate mode of action: Inhibit sodium-iodide symporter (NIS)

NIS function
- Active transport of iodide across cell membrane using sodium ion gradient

Tissues with NIS expression
- Thyroid
- Placenta
- Mammary gland

NIS Inhibitors
- ClO_4^-, SCN^-, NO_3^-



Assessing Exposure in Potentially Susceptible Populations

- Developing fetus
  - Amniotic fluid
- Neonates
  - Blood spots
  - Urine
  - Milk/Formula
- Women
  - Urine
  - Milk
- Populations with low iodine intake

Matrix Selection: Perchlorate Distribution and Excretion

- Perchlorate is not metabolized in humans and unlikely to bioaccumulate significantly
- Perchlorate absorbed by body is secreted in urine (and milk)
- In non-lactating people, perchlorate in 24-hr urine approximates daily dose
- Unambiguous detection of perchlorate, thiocyanate, nitrate and iodide using IC-MS/MS

Method Application

National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES)

Blount BC, Valentin-Blasini L, Osterloh JD, Mauldin JP, and Pirkle JL (2006). Perchlorate Exposure of the U.S. Population, 2001- 2002. *J Expo Sci Environ Epidemiol.* advance online publication, October 18, 2006; doi:10.1038/sj.jes.7500535.

Blount BC, Pirkle JL, Osterloh JD, Valentin-Blasini L and Caldwell KL (2006). Urinary perchlorate and thyroid hormone levels in adolescent and adult men and women living in the United States. *Environ Health Perspect* 114(12):1867-1871. doi:10.1289/ehp.9466

Steinmaus C, Miller M, and Howd R (2007). Impact of Smoking and Thiocyanate on Perchlorate and Thyroid Hormone Associations in the 2001-2002 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. Environ Health Perspect in press. doi:10.1289/ehp.10300

NHANES

- Ongoing CDC cross-sectional survey designed to collect data on the health and nutritional status of the U.S. population (~5000/yr)
- Conducted by National Center for Health Statistics
- Complex, multistage, area probability design: samples the U.S. population based on age, sex, race/ethnicity, income
- NHANES surveys: I (71-75), II (76-80), III (88-94), 99-00, 01-02, 03-04, 05-06, 07-08, …

NHANES

- Thorough interview and physical exam, including blood and urine collection
- Biomarkers of exposure to environmental chemicals quantified in blood and/or urine

Perchlorate NHANES Objectives

1. What is the prevalence and magnitude of exposure to perchlorate in the US population?
2. Are environmental urinary perchlorate levels associated with changes in serum TSH and total T4 (thyroid function) in the general U.S. population?
3. Which exposure sources are associated with increased urinary perchlorate?
4. Are exposure levels changing over time in multiple NHANES study periods?

Study Objectives

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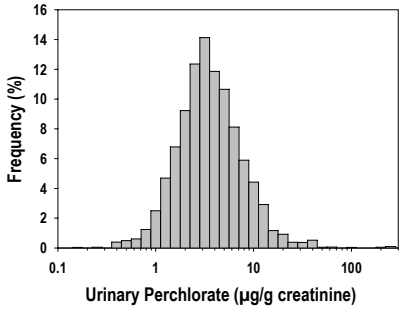
NHANES 2001 – 2002

- 2820 study participants
- Urinary perchlorate, nitrate, thiocyanate, iodine
- Serum thyroid stimulating hormone and thyroxine
- Additional measurements such as urine creatinine, serum cotinine
- Demographic information

NHANES 2001 – 2002: Characteristics of study population

Category	(n)	(%)
Age		
6 years and over	2820	100.0
6 to 11 years	374	13.3
12 to 19 years	828	29.4
20 years and over	1618	57.4
Sex		
Female	1485	52.7
Male	1335	47.3
Race/ethnic groups		
Non-Hispanic White	1228	43.5
Non-Hispanic Black	681	24.1
Mexican American	708	25.1
Other race/ethnic groups	203	7.2

Urinary Perchlorate Distribution NHANES 2001 – 2002



Distribution of urinary perchlorate (µg/g of creatinine) in the U.S. population ages 6+, NHANES 2001 - 2002

Age	N	Geometric mean	5th pctile	50th pctile	95th pctile
All	2818	3.56	1.10	3.38	12.7
6-11 yrs	374	5.71*	1.91	5.79	17.4
12-19 yrs	827	2.95	0.92	2.89	9.87
20+ yrs	1617	3.46	1.09	3.25	12.3

Estimating dose based on spot urine perchlorate

study participant assumptions:

- Uniform urinary excretion of perchlorate and creatinine
- measured body weight and height
- Daily creatinine excretion estimated from lean body mass:

$$k \times (140 - \text{age[yr]}) \times Wt(kg)^{1.5} \times Ht(cm)^{0.5}$$

Where k = 1.93 for men, 1.64 for women)

- Perchlorate dose estimated assuming 100% absorption and spot urine representative of daily exposure per unit creatinine

Daily dose/bw = (ClO4 µg/g Cre) × daily Cre g ÷ bw kg

Mage et al (2004) J Expo Anal Environ Epidemiol 2004:14: 457–465.

Estimated perchlorate dose in U.S. females, NHANES 2001 – 2002

Percentile	Urine perchlorate (µg/g of creatinine)	Estimated perchlorate dose (µg/kg/day)
5th	1.13	0.019
10th	1.48	0.026
25th	2.25	0.038
50th	3.59	0.062
75th	5.99	0.099
90th	10.0	0.176
95th	13.4	0.236

EPA RfD = 0.7 µg/kg/day

Conclusions (1)

- Perchlorate detected in 100% of urine samples tested
- Log normal distribution
- Children (6 – 11 yrs) have higher urine perchlorate compared with older age groups (12 + yrs)
- 95th percentile of dose estimates for adults is approximately 1/3 the EPA reference dose

Study Objectives

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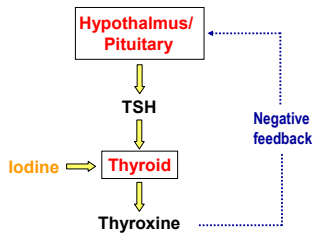
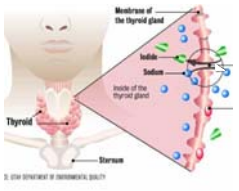
Normal thyroid function



Perchlorate can inhibit the thyroid

- Perchlorate mode of action
  - Perchlorate competes with iodide for active transport into the thyroid
  - Perchlorate at pharmacological doses inhibits thyroxine production, leading to decreased serum thyroxine and increased serum TSH
- Key question
  - Does exposure to relatively low levels of perchlorate in the environment alter thyroid hormone levels?



Design and Methods

- Cross-sectional multiple regression analysis
- Random one-third subsample of NHANES 2001 - 2002
- Perchlorate, TSH and T4 measured in 2299 study participants, with 1111 women in final regression analysis

Multiple Regression Analysis

- Separate regression analyses for TSH and total T4 with urine perchlorate
  - Adjusted for complex survey design and population weighting
- Models included covariates known or suspected to affect thyroid function:
  - Age, sex, race/ethnicity,
  - BMI, total caloric intake, hours since last meal
  - Pregnancy, premenarche, post-menopausal status
  - Medication categories: beta-blockers, estrogen formulations, glucocorticoids, androgens, and other drugs
  - C-reactive protein (CRP), serum albumin, urinary creatinine, serum cotinine, urine nitrate, and urine thiocyanate
- Exclusions: <12 years old, thyroid disease, or taking thyroid medications

Results

Associations of urine perchlorate with serum TSH or T4:

- Men:
  - » Not significant for either TSH or T4
- Women
  - » Significant for both TSH and T4
- Women with urinary iodine < 100 µg/L (susceptible group)
  - » Significant for both TSH and T4
- Women with urinary iodine ≥ 100 µg/L
  - » Significant only for TSH

Results (cont'd)

- Significant covariates
  - Estrogen-related states (mainly on T4): estrogen meds, pre-menarche, pregnancy, post-menopause
  - Previously reported associations: age, race/ethnicity, BMI, caloric intake, CRP, smoking (thiocyanate)
- Predicted effect size of perchlorate on TSH and T4 in females with urinary iodine < 100 µg/L
  - Predicted effect is small to moderate
  - Beta coefficients predict mg/kg/day doses required to move median TSH or T4 to out of the normal range (Dourson et al)

Regression analysis of log(perchlorate) for women by iodine level

	Urine iodine <100		Urine iodine ≥100	
	Beta for perchlorate	p-value	Beta for perchlorate	p-value
Log(TSH)	0.123	0.0010	0.114	0.0249
n	356		697	
R^2	0.061		0.145	
Total T4	-0.892	<0.0001	0.220	0.5591
n	348		724	
R^2	0.240		0.149	

Predicted effect of perchlorate on TSH or T4: Females 12 + with urinary iodine < 100 µg/L

Change in urinary perchlorate	Change in Total T4 (µg/dL)	Change in TSH Starting at 2.97 (IU/L)
min → max (0.19-100 µg/L)	-2.43	3.45
5th → 95th percentile (0.65-12.0 µg/L)	-1.13	1.49
25th → 75th percentile (1.6-5.2 µg/L)	-0.45	0.60
Medical Normal Ranges	T4 5-12	TSH 0.3-4.5

Regression analysis of perchlorate and thyroid function for women by iodine level and smoking

		Smoke exposure category		
		High (cotinine > 10 ng/mL)	Medium (0.015 ≤ cotinine≤ 10ng/mL)	Low (cotinine < 0.015 ng/mL)
		beta (p-value)	beta (p-value)	beta (p-value)
Total T4	All women	-1.2242 (.0131)	-0.5761 (.0236)	NS
	women with urinary iodine < 100 µg/L	-1.4761 (.0014)	-0.8955 (.0028)	NS
	women with urinary iodine ≥ 100 µg/L	-0.8423 (.1084)	NS	NS
TSH	All women	0.2171 (.0037)	0.1454 (.0035)	0.1317 (.0139)
	women with urinary iodine < 100 µg/L	0.2035 (.0242)	0.1295 (.0310)	0.1162 (.0232)
	women with urinary iodine ≥ 100 µg/L	0.2274 (.0035)	0.1535 (.0091)	0.1402 (.0280)

Steinmaus, et al July 2007 EHP

Regression analysis of perchlorate and T4 for female smokers at different iodine cut-points

	Low iodine group		High iodine group	
Urine iodine cutoff (µg/L)	Beta for perchlorate	p-value	Beta for perchlorate	p-value
70	-1.3640	0.0108	-0.9676	0.0672
80	-1.3362	0.0062	-0.9733	0.0773
90	-1.4497	0.0049	-0.8742	0.0829
100	-1.4882	0.0020	-0.8532	0.1072
110	-1.3727	0.0065	-0.8786	0.1297
120	-1.3454	0.0073	-0.8029	0.1865
130	-1.3070	0.0105	-0.8251	0.1962
140	-1.2716	0.0195	-0.7252	0.2729
150	-1.2897	0.0147	-0.8187	0.1446
160	-1.2946	0.0208	-0.9572	0.0846
170	-1.2620	0.0142	-0.9529	0.1445
180	-1.3069	0.0075	-1.0277	0.1017
190	-1.3164	0.0078	-0.9866	0.1175
200	-1.3429	0.0073	-1.1089	0.0849

Regression analysis of perchlorate and TSH for female smokers at different iodine cut-points

	Low iodine group		High iodine group	
Urine iodine cutoff (µg/L)	Beta for perchlorate	p-value	Beta for perchlorate	p-value
70	0.1611	0.1793	0.2319	0.0008
80	0.1885	0.0590	0.2285	0.0016
90	0.2097	0.0211	0.2204	0.0045
100	0.2069	0.0020	0.2253	0.0043
110	0.1909	0.0316	0.2339	0.0037
120	0.1949	0.0212	0.2397	0.0051
130	0.1997	0.0176	0.2455	0.0048
140	0.1950	0.0190	0.2574	0.0082
150	0.1985	0.0171	0.2455	0.0101
160	0.2009	0.0160	0.2496	0.0177
170	0.2018	0.0133	0.2358	0.0253
180	0.2149	0.0076	0.2427	0.0272
190	0.2195	0.0071	0.1860	0.0756
200	0.2257	0.0071	0.1705	0.0821

Other Studies of Perchlorate-Exposed Women

	Greer et al. (2002)	Tellez et al. (2005)	Blount et al. (2006)
Design	Experimental 4 dose groups	Epi-study 3 Chilean towns	Cross-sectional population survey
Number of women	21	184 (all pregnant)	1111
No. of women with iodine < 100 µg/L	Unknown (<10)	3	392
Chronic exposure	No	Yes	Yes
Effect on TSH, T4	No	No	Yes

*Reanalysis of Greer et al data underway with focus on females with lower iodine

Limitations

- Free T4, Anti-TPO not available
- Cross-sectional association
- Possible that perchlorate could be a surrogate for an unknown variable

Strengths

- Large number of women
- Targets a susceptible group
- Assesses chronic exposure
- Largest study of women with perchlorate exposure and low iodine status

Conclusions (2)

- For women, urinary perchlorate associated with biologically coherent changes in thyroid hormone levels:
  - Increased TSH and decreased T4
- Driven by susceptible groups:
  - Urine iodine < 100 µg/L
  - High thiocyanate (smokers)
- Model consistent with other known effectors of thyroid function
  - Estrogen, age, BMI, race/ethnicity, sex

Significance

- Perchlorate exposure is more prevalent than expected
- The predicted effect on T4 and TSH is at lower levels of perchlorate than previously determined experimentally in humans or in observational studies.
- Data provides additional information on perchlorate dose-response in the U.S. population

Future Directions

- Perchlorate exposure and 6 additional thyroid-related markers in NHANES 2007-2008, 2001-2002
  - Free T4, free T3, total T3, TG
  - Anti-TPO, anti-TG
- Perchlorate source apportionment (food vs water)
- Perchlorate exposure and thyroid hormone levels in infants
- Track trends in US perchlorate exposure
- Perinatal perchlorate exposure to fetus/infant
- Study active transport of perchlorate in vitro and in vivo

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