

# Lead poisoning caused by Indian ethnic remedies in Italy

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## KEY WORDS

Lead poisoning; alternative medicine

## SUMMARY

**Background:** *Complementary or alternative medicine has become widespread in Western Countries and since the remedies are "natural" they are believed to be free of toxic effects and health risks. Ethnic remedies may contain lead, other metals and toxic substances.* **Objectives:** *To show how lead poisoning as a result of using ethnic remedies may be severe enough to cause serious damage to health, and to increase awareness among family doctors and occupational physicians of the risks associated with ethnic remedies.* **Methods and results:** *Description of ethnic remedy-related lead poisoning in 2 native Italian adults, with clinical, laboratory and toxicological data.* **Conclusions:** *When metal poisoning is diagnosed, ethnic remedies should be included among the putative sources so as to avoid erroneous attribution to workplace exposure and application of unneeded preventive measures.*