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Extraction efficiency of 210Po in Polish herbal teas

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Air and food are the main sources of many chemical elements, also natural and artificial radionuclides transferred to human organisms. The intensity of radioisotopes intake depends on the place of residence, local radiation quantity, diet habits and food origin. So far, during annual radiation doses evaluations in Poland, the most often consumed food products were taken into account. Among naturally occurring radionuclides, their potential ingestion and internal expose, the most important seems to be 210Po and its parent nuclide 210Pb.

Presented are results of a study on 210Po extraction efficiency in Polish herbal teas and risk to human consumer due to exposure from highly radiotoxic decay particles emitted by 210Po. 12 most popular commercially available Polish herbal teas, and their infusions in tap water and filtered water were analyzed and 210Po activity concentrations were calculated.

The results in dried plants were between 2.11 ± 0.09 for milk thistle and 33.70 ± 0.42 Bq-kg-1 dry wt. for cistus. The extraction efficiencies into tap water ranged from 4.93 ± 0.39 % for lime to 27.40 ± 1.43 % for elder, while for activated carbon filtered water were between 7.55 ± 0.47 % for lime and 20.32 ± 1.09 % for elder and there were no statistically significant differences between both extractions. There was no correlation found between 210Po extraction efficiency into infusions and 210Po activity concentrations in dried herbs. Herbal teas consumption should not contribute significantly to the annual effective radiation dose in Poland.

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