

EXPOSURE TO ENDOCRINE DISRUPTORS AND ALTERATIONS IN MINERALIZED TISSUES: A NARRATIVE REVIEW.

Exposición a disruptores endocrinos y alteraciones
en tejidos mineralizados: Revisión Narrativa.

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ABSTRACT:

Background: Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals (EDCs) would cause alterations in organs/systems of exposed individuals or their progeny.

Objective: To identify and analyze the main published findings on the effects of exposure to EDCs on teeth, cartilage, and bone.

Material and Methods: Two databases were analyzed: Medline and Web of Science. Only observational studies analyzing the effect of EDCs on mineralized tissues published since 2006 were included in the study.

Results: 25 articles were selected, most of them involving EDCs pesticides, plasticizers, or personal care products, highlighting organochlorine compounds, bisphenols, phthalates, dioxins, parabens, and perfluoroalkyls. Thirty-six per cent of the studies reported an accumulation of EDCs in teeth or bones, while 64% reported alterations in their development or morphology, mainly at the bone level, primarily affecting their mineral density and size, as well as that of the bones of exposed individuals or their progeny. The type of effect observed was related to the EDCs analyzed, and it seemed to depend on variables such as age, sex, ethnicity/race, and even the metabolic status of the individuals in the different species analyzed. No evidence associated with effects on cartilage was found.

Conclusion: EDCs in the environment, at work, or at home, under different exposure routes, are capable of accumulating in teeth and bone, particularly affecting the latter. It is necessary to study the effect of EDCs on mineralized tissues in agro-industrial areas, especially on teeth.¹

KEYWORDS:

Endocrine disruptors; bone and bones; cartilage; tooth; bioaccumulation; review.

RESUMEN:

Antecedentes: Los Químicos Disruptores Endocrinos (EDCs) causarían alteraciones en órganos/sistemas de individuos expuestos, o su progeñie.

Objetivo: Identificar y analizar los principales hallazgos publicados sobre el efecto de la exposición a EDCs en dientes, cartílago y hueso.

Material y Métodos: Se analizaron dos bases de datos: Medline y Web of Science, incluyendo solo estudios observacionales publicados desde el 2006, analizando el efecto de los EDCs sobre tejidos mineralizados.

Resultados: 25 artículos fueron seleccionados, siendo la mayoría de los EDCs pesticidas, plastificantes o productos de cuidado personal, destacando los compuestos Organoclorados, Bisfenoles, Ftalatos, Dioxinas, Parabenos y los Perfluoroalquilos. Un 36% de los estudios reportaron un acúmulo de EDCs en dientes o huesos, mientras que un 64% informaron

de alteraciones en su desarrollo o morfología, particularmente a nivel de huesos, afectando principalmente su densidad mineral y su tamaño, así como el de los individuos expuestos o su progeñie. El tipo de efecto observado tuvo relación con el EDCs analizado, pareciendo depender de variables tales como edad, sexo, etnia/raza e incluso el estado metabólico de los individuos, en las diferentes especies analizadas. No se encontraron evidencias asociadas a efectos en el cartílago.

Conclusión: Los EDCs en el medio ambiente, ámbito laboral o doméstico, bajo distintas rutas de exposición, son capaces de acumularse en diente y hueso, afectando particularmente a este último. Es necesario estudiar el efecto de los EDCs en los tejidos mineralizados en zonas agroindustriales, particularmente a nivel de dientes.

PALABRAS CLAVE:

Disruptores endocrinos; huesos; cartílago; diente; bioacumulación; revisión.

INTRODUCTION.

Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals (EDCs) can alter the hormonal balance and the regulation of embryonic development,¹ altering the function of the endocrine system.² These compounds produce adverse effects on the hypothalamus, thyroid, mammary glands, pancreas, liver, adrenal glands, intestine, gonads, and the immune system,³⁻⁸ causing alterations in glucose regulation and predisposing to obesity.⁹ EDCs, contained in pesticides, plastics, flame retardants or personal care products, are released into the environment, contaminating ecosystems and exposed living beings;¹⁰ they can cross the placental barrier, exposing the fetus to their harmful effects.¹

Observational studies (OS) allow to establish an association between environmental contaminants and their harmful effect on exposed populations. The external validity and strength of association of the studies will depend on their design, not allowing for causality to be established.

However, OS are the first step in the research of potential risk factors.¹¹ Thus, the exposure of populations to EDCs – organophosphate and pyrethroid pesticides, bisphenol A (BPA), manganese (Mn) and perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) – has been associated with alterations in the nervous system, cognitive performance,¹²⁻¹⁵ renal system,¹⁶ reproductive system,¹⁷ diabetes,^{18,19} in addition to an increase in deformities of the maxillofacial complex in newborns from rural areas of Chile.²⁰

Consequently, since the introduction of the term Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals (EDCs) in 2006, there has been an increase in the literature on the effects of exposure to these substances, with growing interest in the effect of these compounds on mineralized tissues. In this sense, the development of dental, cartilage, and bone tissues, which share a common neuroectodermal embryological origin,²¹⁻²³ are closely linked to hormonal control, being susceptible to exposure to EDCs.²⁴

Alterations during the formation of mineralized tissues, due to exposure to toxic substances, can result in morphological or structural damage both at the dental,^{25,26} bone,²⁷ and cartilaginous²⁸⁻³⁰ levels. Subsequently, exposure to EDCs should negatively affect these tissues,^{24,31-34} which may explain the consequences observed at the oral and maxillofacial levels. The aim of this study is to identify and analyze the main published findings on the effects of exposure to EDCs on teeth, cartilage, and bone.

MATERIALS AND METHODS.

A narrative review of the literature was carried out using the PRISMA criteria³⁵ as a reference. Two databases were searched: Medline and Web of Science. The following search strategy was used for each database: (“endocrine disruptors” OR “endocrine disrupting chemicals” OR pesticides

OR pesticide) AND (“dental enamel” OR enamel OR dentin OR dentin* OR bone OR “bone tissue” OR bones OR cartilage OR cartilages). OS published in English or Spanish, which analyzed the effect of EDCs on the development of bone, cartilage, or dental tissue, since 2006 –the year in which this term was introduced in the scientific literature– were included in the study. Experimental studies and other narrative reviews were excluded (Figure 1).

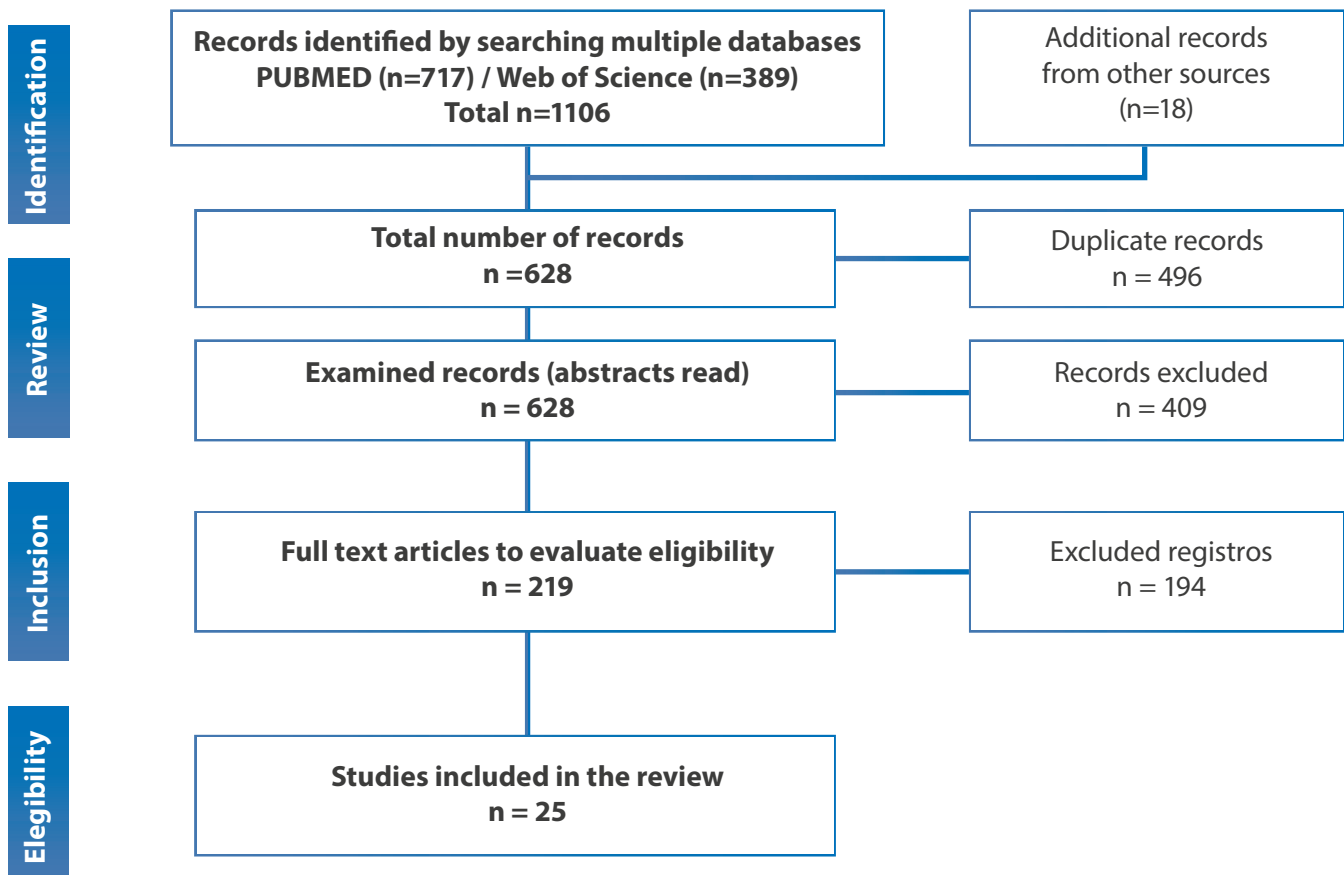
RESULTS.

Twenty-four studies were selected of the 1106 identified articles (Table 1):

11 cross-sectional, seven retrospective, and seven prospective. The most frequently studied EDCs in the articles selected were:

1. perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) (36%);
2. bisphenols (16%);

Figure 1. PRISMA flowchart adapted from the bibliographic systematic review process carried out and its results.³⁵



3. phthalate esters (12%);
4. dioxins (24%);
5. organochlorines (20%);
6. parabens (4%);

in addition to other EDCs such as atrazine, lead, Mn, chlorpyrifos (CPF) (32%). Some articles studied more than one compound.

Accumulation of EDCs

Thirty-six per cent of the studies showed that one of the main effects observed was the accumulation of these compounds in bone and teeth. In this way, environmental exposure to Mn during pregnancy could be detected by its accumulation in the teeth of the progeny of exposed individuals (dentin and enamel). Its levels were measured in the dentin layer immediately adjacent to the enamel in 7-year-old children (36–38). In addition, it was also observed that other EDCs, such as mono-(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (MEHP), a compound used as a plasticizer,³⁹ and the 3,5,6-trichloro-2-pyridinol metabolite of CPFs, organophosphate pesticide,⁴⁰ also deposited in deciduous molars of the children examined.⁴¹

Regarding bone tissue, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB),^{42,43} polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDE): congeners 47, 99 and 153^{42,43} –both compounds present in electrical insulators, plasticizers, and flame retardants^{44,45}– lead,⁴⁶ and perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS),⁴⁷⁻⁵⁰ which are highly fluorinated aliphatic substances,⁵¹ were detected in the bones of different environmentally exposed species (mammals and birds).

This is how perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluoro octane sulfonic acid (PFOS), compounds used in the surfactant and polymer industries,⁵² were detected in bone marrow and trabecular bone, with a preferential distribution in the former, while PFOS was evenly distributed in both.⁵⁰

In humans, PFAS concentrations increased with socioeconomic status and body mass index (BMI) ($p<0.001$), with higher concentrations observed in smokers ($p<0.001$).^{47,49} On the other hand, people with osteoarthritis were found to have higher levels of PFOA and PFOS ($p<0.001$).⁴⁷ Finally,

higher concentrations of PFAS were observed in women with osteoporosis versus women without this condition ($p<0.05$).⁵³

Morphological defects

The selected studies detected morphological defects only in bone tissue. This is how exposure to water contaminated with high concentrations of pesticides such as atrazine, dicamba, bentazone, CPF, mecoprop, dimethoate, 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4-D) and 4-chloro-2-methylphenoxyacetic acid (MCPA), in agricultural areas, was associated with a decrease in total length of the skeleton of exposed frogs, while in sites with low concentrations of EDCs only a decrease in tibial length was observed.⁵⁴

Likewise, high concentrations of environmental contaminants would be responsible for the bone morphological alterations reported in otters and polar bears, which would be the reflection of histological alterations of the mineralized tissues, induced by exposure to EDCs. Thus, the presence of dioxins in the femur of marine mammals exposed to PCBs would be related to an increase in the area, content, density, and thickness of the cortical bone of the femur⁵⁵ and a decrease in the bone mineral density (BMD) of the penis bone of polar bears, affecting their reproductive capacity.⁵⁶ This decrease in bone density would be significantly lower compared to PCB 74 and 153, hexachlorobenzene (HCB), PBDE-153, and other organochlorines.⁴³

In humans, exposure to EDCs also had effects on the bone structure of obese children aged 8 to 12 years environmentally exposed to PFAS, showing an association between the concentration of perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA) in the children's serum with a decrease in the density of their calcaneal bone ($p=0.01$).⁵⁷ Similarly, the presence of a diet rich in shellfish from marine areas contaminated with PCB 153 and HCB, fungicides for seed treatment,⁵⁸ was related to a decrease in the size of the same bone in exposed postmenopausal women ($p<0.001$), showing limited evidence that exposure to organochlorines and dioxins is related

to the presence of osteoporosis in this population.⁵⁹

According to studies in post-menopausal women, BPA, which is used in the lining of cans, in polycarbonate containers for food use, in dental sealants and resins, and in thermal paper receipts,⁶⁰⁻⁶² was associated with increased plasma calcium levels in women with osteoporosis ($p<0.05$).⁶³ In addition, in these women, exposure to methylparaben was related to an increase in markers of osteoclastogenesis, with an association between concentrations of urinary phthalate metabolites and decreased BMD in the femur and spine ($p<0.05$).⁶⁴

Finally, exposure to EDCs during pregnancy revealed important effects on the offspring. A longitudinal study reported on the association between prenatal concentrations of PFAS and bone health in 17-year-old girls, showing that prenatal exposure to these EDCs was associated with inverse effects on body size and bone mass of the tibia, femur, and hip ($p<0.05$).⁶⁵

Modulating Factors

The following factors seem to influence the concentrations of EDCs detected, as well as the morphological alterations observed in exposed individuals.

Sex: Populations exposed to PFOA and PFOS showed higher concentrations in male individuals ($p<0.001$).⁴⁸ Interestingly, these EDCs have been associated with the presence of osteoarthritis only in females ($p<0.001$).⁴⁷ For its part, PFNA was associated with an increase in bone mineral content (BMC), preferably in the tibia, femur, and hip of females ($p<0.05$),⁶⁵ while PFOA was associated with a higher prevalence risk of fracture, mainly in males.⁶⁶ On the contrary, a third study showed that there would be no association between serum levels of PFOA and PFOS with the report of fractures in both females and males ($p>0.05$).⁴⁹

Finally, the concentration of 2,4-dichlorophenol was associated with a lower BMD and a higher prevalence of osteopenia and osteoporosis in males ($p<0.05$).⁶⁷

Ontogenetic Status: Populations exposed to

PFOA and PFOS showed serum concentrations that increased with age ($p<0.001$).^{47,49} Likewise, the appearance of bone abnormalities also seems to be dependent on age. This is how the exposure of pregnant women to bisphenol S (BPS) during the first trimester was associated with a decrease in the BMD and BMC of the progeny at ten years ($p<0.01$).

However, this was not noted at six years ($p>0.05$), showing that the harmful effect at the bone level would be evidenced in the long term.⁶⁸ For its part, exposure to high concentrations of low molecular weight phthalates, phthalic acid, and di-(2-ethylhexyl)-phthalate (DEHP), plasticizers present in personal care and medical products,^{69,70} in the third trimester of gestation, was associated with a high BMC at six years, while exposure to high concentrations of di-n-octylphthalate (DNOP), present in plasticizers, coatings, and pesticides,⁷¹ were associated, not significantly ($p>0.05$), to a lower BMC at ten years.⁶⁸

It should be noted that in other cases no correlation was observed between bone PFAS concentrations and age or bone volume, however a negative trend was observed between bone PFOS concentration and bone volume ($p=0.06$).⁵⁰

Ethnic Differences: PFOA and PFOS showed serum concentrations in exposed populations that differed by race/ethnicity, being higher in white and non-Hispanic black individuals, while the lowest mean concentrations of both exposures were observed in Mexican-Americans ($p<0.001$).⁴⁷ Regarding the differences in observed effects, exposure to high concentrations of PBDE 28 and 153 was associated with smaller birth size in Hispanic women, while exposure to PFOA was associated with smaller birth size only in black women. Finally, perfluorooctanesulfonamide (PFOSA) exposure was associated with an increase in total length in newborns of white women ($p<0.001$).⁷²

Hormonal Variations: Exposure to certain substances such as parabens,⁶⁹ and benzophenone-3, was associated with an increase in bone BMD preferentially in men, and premenopausal women.

Table 1. Observational studies of the effects on dental and bone tissue due to exposure to EDCs.

Population	EDCs studied	Target Tissue-Cell	Observational studies in dental tissue			Author
			Comparison /Control	Results		
Pregnant women exposed to Mn present in the floor dust of their homes	Mn	Deposit of EDCs in dental tissue of children	No	Detection in dentin and enamel Detection in dentin mainly formed in the third trimester Detection in dentin	Arora, 2012 ³⁶	
Rural population exposed to pesticides such as Maneb and Mancozeb			No		Gunier, 2015 ³⁸	
Children with perinatal exposures to pollutants	DEP, MEHP, CPF, 3-PBA, cyfluthrin		Deposit of EDCs in deciduous molars of children		No	Higher concentrations of MEHP and CPF
Observational studies in bone tissue						
Population	EDCs	Target Tissue-Cell	Comparison	Results	Author	
Populations exposed to high concentrations of organochlorines and dioxins through the diet	PCB 28, 52, 101, 105, 118, 128, 138, 153, 156, 170, 180, 183, 187, Aldrin, β -HCH, γ -Chlordane, cis-Nonachlor, p,p'-DDE, p,p'-DDT, HCB, Mirex, trans-Nonachlor	Morphological analysis of the right calcaneal bone	No	PCB 153 and HCB \downarrow size. Other compounds without association. No association with significant predictors of bone stiffness.	Côté, 2006 ⁵⁹	
Small mammals exposed to EDCs through environmental water	PCB and DDE	Femur	No	PCB \uparrow cortical bone (area, content, and thickness) and \downarrow trabecular density DDE does not cause alterations	Roos, 2010 ⁵⁵	
Large mammals exposed to dioxins and organochlorines due to environmental pollution	PCB: 28, 52, 101, 105, 118, 138/163, 153, 156, 170, 180, 183, 187, 194. DDT:p,p'-DDT, o,p'-DDT, p,p'-DDE, p,p'-DDD PBDE: 47, 99, 100, 153 and 154	Metacarpus and metatarsus	No	Bone marrow PCB 99, 105, 118, 138/163, 153, 156, 170, 180 and 187 detection DDT, DDE, DDD below limit PBDE 138 below limit PBDE 138 not detected PBDE 47, 99 and 153 detected in MO	Hassan, 2013 ⁴²	
Large mammals exposed to dioxins due to environmental contamination	PCB	Penis	No	PCB \downarrow BMD	Sonne, 2015 ⁵⁶	
Pregnant women exposed to organochlorines due to environmental exposure	β -HCH, γ -HCH, HCB, trans-nonacloro, p,p-DDE, o, p'-DDD, p,p'-DDD, PBDE 28, 47, 85, 99, 100, 153, 183, 209	Body analysis in newborns	No	PBDEs 28-153 \downarrow total length Other compounds without association	Louis, 2018 ⁷²	
Large mammals exposed to dioxins and organochlorines due to environmental pollution	PCB 74, DDT3, p, p'-DDE, HCH3, α -HCH, PBDE 153, HCB, HCH, β -HCH	Penis	No	PCB 74 in higher concentrations PCB 74 and 153, HCB, HCH, β -HCH, ClBz, PBDE-153 \uparrow BMD	Daugaard, Petersen, 2018 ⁴³	
Small amphibians exposed to EDCs in high and low concentrations through environmental water	Atrazine, deisopropylatrazine, diethylatrazine, dicamba, bentazone, CPF, mecoprop, dimethoate, 2,4-D, MCPA	Tibia	No	\downarrow total length in high exposure sites \uparrow tibial length in low exposure sites	Spear, 2009 ⁵⁴	

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Population	EDCs	Observational studies in bone tissue		Results	Author
		Target Tissue-Cell	Comparison		
Population exposed to EDCs due to environmental contamination	Barium, Cadmium, Cesium, Mn, Lead, BPA, Triclosan, 2-Hydroxyfluorene, 1-Hydroxypyrene, 1-Naphthol, 2-Naphthol/ Cobalt, Molybdenum, Antimony, Strontium, Thallium, Tin, Tungsten, Uranium, Benzophenone 3, 3-hydroxyfluorene, 9-hydroxyfluorene, 1-hydroxyphenanthene, 2-hydroxyphenanthene, 3-hydroxyphenanthene	Perioral bone	No	↑ bone loss in the presence of high levels of Cadmium, Nitrate, Thiocyanate, propyl paraben, and PAH	Shiue, 2015 ⁷³
Birds exposed to lead due to environmental contamination	Lead	Femur	No	Detection in bone tissue	Baxter, 2015 ⁴⁶
Population exposed to phthalates in plastic products femoral BMD	Phthalates: MNBP, DEP, DEHP, BBP, DINP, DNOP, DIDP	Femur and spine	No	Phthalates ↓ Spinal and (primarily MNBP)	DeFlorio-Barker, 2016 ⁶⁴
Population exposed to phthalates and parabens in plastic products	Bisphenols: BPA, BPS, BPF and BPAF Parabens: methyl, ethyl, propyl, butyl, and benzyl paraben	Plasma	Healthy women of the same age	BPA was associated with ↑ plasma calcium levels, unrelated to the presence or absence of osteoporosis MP abundant in plasma, positively associated with CTx in women with osteoporosis	Vitku, 2018 ⁶³
Pregnant women exposed to bisphenols and phthalates in plastic products	Bisphenols (BPA-BPS-BPF) Phthalates (Phthalic acid, DEHP, DNOP) BMC	Bone mass in children	No	BPS associated with < BMD and BMC Phthalic acid and DEHP associated with high DNOP was associated with low BMC	Van Zwol-Janssens, 2020 ⁶⁸
Population exposed to PFAS due to environmental contamination	PFOA and PFOS	NS	No	Men had > levels of PFOA and PFOS Relationship between levels of PFAS (PFOS and PFOA), and the presence of osteoarthritis	Uhl, 2013 ⁴⁷
		Lumbar spine and femur	No	PFOA and PFOS: > concentration in men Association between PFOS and ↓ spinal BMD in non-menopausal women. No association between PFOA, PFOS and femoral neck BMD	Lin, 2014 ⁴⁹
Population environmentally exposed to high and low concentrations of PFAS	PFAS	NS	Unexposed population	PFOA: Lowest Stiffness Index. High affinity for hydroxyapatite	Di Nisio, 2020 ⁶⁶

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Population	EDCs	Observational studies in bone tissue		Results	Author
		Target Tissue-Cell	Comparison		
Population exposed to PFAS due to environmental contamination	PFOA, PFOS, PFHxS, PFNA, PFOSA	Ribs	No	Low accumulation of PFAS in ribs, with PFOA being the main substance	Pérez, 2013 ⁴⁸
	PFOA, PFOS, PFHxS, and PFNA	Lumbar spine and femur	No	Higher PFAS in women with osteoporosis. No association between PFAS and BMD in men and pre-menopausal women	Khalil, 2016 ⁵³
	PFOA, PFOS, and PFNA	Skull, humerus, rib, femur, tibia, and fibula	No	>accumulation of PFOS and PFOA. PFNA was present in long bones. Negative association between PFOS and relative bone volume	Koskela, 2017 ⁵⁰
Obese children exposed to PFAS due to environmental contamination	PFOA, PFOS, PFNA, and PFHxS	Calcaneus	No	Negative association between PFAS and bone health in obese children PFAS influence bone turnover	Khalil, 2018 ⁵⁷
Population exposed to PFAS due to environmental contamination	PFOS, PFOA, PFHxS, and PFNA	Tibia, femur, and hip	Girls from a previous study by the authors	Negative association between PFOS, PFOA, PFHxS and PFNA, and bone size and mass PFNA was positively associated with bone mineral content	Jeddy, 2018 ⁶⁵
Pregnant women exposed to PFAS due to environmental contamination	PFOA, PFOSA, PFHxS	Anthropometric evaluation of newborns	No	PFAS associate ↓ the length of the bones and affects the size of newborns according to ethnicity	Louis, 2018 ⁷²
Population exposed to EDCs in personal care and parabens and Benzophedaily consumer products	BPA, Benzophenone-3, Triclosan, Butylparaben, Ethylparaben, Methylparaben, Propylparaben, 2, 5-Dichlorophenol, and 2, 4-Dichlorophenol	Femur; inter-trochanteric and lumbar spine	No	Ethyl, methyl, propyl none-3 were associated with > BMD in men and premenopausal women 2,4-dichlorophenol was associated with lower BMD and > prevalence of osteopenia + osteoporosis in men BPA was associated with a higher prevalence of osteopenia + osteoporosis in postmenopausal women	Wang, 2020 ⁶⁷

2,4-D: 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid, **3-PBA:** 3-phenoxybenzoic acid, **4,4-DDE/p,p'-DDE:** Dichlorodiphenyldichloroethylene, **α/β-HCH:** α/β Hexachlorocyclohexane, **BBP:** Benzyl butyl phthalate, **BMC:** Bone Mineral Content, **BMD:** Bone Mineral Density, **BPA:** Bisphenol A, **BPAF:** Bisphenol AF, **BPF:** Bisphenol F, **BPS:** Bisphenol S, **CIBz:** Chlorobenzene, **CPF:** Chlorpyrifos, **CTX:** C-Telopeptide bonds collagen crosslinked, **DDT3:** Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane, **DEHP:** Di (2-ethylhexyl) phthalate, **DEP:** Di ethyl phthalate, **DIDP:** Di isodecyl phthalate, **DINP:** Di isononyl phthalate, **DNOP:** Di-n-octyl phthalate, **HCB:** Hexachlorobenzene, **HCH3:** Hexachlorohexane, **MCPA:** 4-Chloro-2-Methylphenoxyacetic Acid, **MEHP:** Mono-(2-Ethylhexyl) Phthalate, **Mn:** Manganese, **MNBP:** Mono-n-Butyl Phthalate, **MO:** Bone Marrow, **PAH:** Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbon, **PBDE:** Polybrominated diphenyl ethers, **PCB:** Polychlorinated Biphenyls, **PFAS:** Perfluoroalkyl Substances, **PFHxS:** Perfluorooctane Sulfonic Acid or Perfluorohexane Sulfonate, **PFNA:** Perfluorononanoic Acid, **PFOA:** Perfl Acid uorooctanoic, **PFOS:** Perfluorooctane Sulfonic Acid, **PFOSA:** Perfluorooctanesulfonamide, **p,p'-DDT:** Dichloro diphenyl trichloroethane, **NS:** Not Specified, **TCPy:** 3,5,6-trichloro-2-pyridinol.

In contrast, BPA led to a higher prevalence of osteopenia and/or osteoporosis in the lumbar spine only in postmenopausal women ($p < 0.05$).⁶⁷

Likewise, the increase in serum PFOS level was associated with a decrease in lumbar spine BMD in non-menopausal women; no association between serum PFOA and PFOS concentration with femoral neck BMD in non-menopausal women, compared with men or menopausal women ($p > 0.05$).⁴⁹

DISCUSSION.

EDCs are found in a wide range of consumer and personal care products and items in many daily activities,⁷³ An important part of the chemicals studied in this review are part of the composition of pesticides that are widely used in agricultural areas,⁷⁴ contaminating fruits and vegetables, consumed by the population.^{74,75}

This exposure has been related to neuro-developmental alterations in individuals, motor disorders, poor cognitive performance, memory difficulties, as well as genotoxicity and neoplasms.⁷⁶⁻⁷⁸ According to the articles selected in this study, EDCs would accumulate in dental³⁶⁻³⁸ and bone^{41-43,46-50} tissues, particularly in children. They can cross the placenta, an important barrier for the fetal protection during pregnancy, which responds to endocrine signals induced by these compounds,⁷⁹ eventually affecting fetal development.⁸⁰

Likewise, it has been shown that some EDCs can accumulate in placental tissues, disturbing the function of this structure.⁷⁹ In relation to morphological and structural alterations, or chemical constitution, of mineralized tissues, a relevant finding was the association between high environmental concentrations of EDCs and decreased bone density, particularly in premenopausal women,⁴⁹ where the effect of EDCs could depend on the levels of circulating estrogens – or their receptors – in exposed individuals,⁸¹ affecting bone turnover through mechanisms such as:

a) The alteration of osteoblastic and osteoclastic activity;^{27,82}

b) Interference with cell survival through 17β -estradiol;³²

c) Induction of apoptosis of osteoblasts;

d) Competition for 17β -estradiol receptors (estrogenic receptors (ER- α and ER- β)⁸³), as is the case of phthalate esters (benzyl butyl phthalate [BBP] and di-butyl phthalate [DBP]), which mimic the effect of 17β -estradiol on rat osteoblasts, altering proliferative signaling.⁸⁴

A similar effect has been observed in dental tissue, where the dental epithelium (ameloblasts) of rats would express ER- α ,⁸⁵ whose activity would be inhibited, affecting amelogenesis, mainly in males.⁸⁶ In parallel, certain EDCs, such as Bisphenols, could interfere with the function of thyroid hormones – thyroxine (T4), triiodothyronine (T3) and thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH) – affecting their synthesis, transport, metabolism or acting as an antagonist of their receptors.⁸⁷

In this way, the effects on mineralized tissues could also be an indication of endocrine alterations, especially in regions where the environmental concentrations of these compounds are particularly high. Despite the presence of ER in dental and bone cells, and the existence of a common neuroectodermal embryological origin, between osteoblasts, odontoblasts, and pulp cells,²¹⁻²³ it is surprising to find that most OS only record abnormalities at the bone level.

However, a growing number of *in vitro*^{85,88} and *in vivo*^{34,88,89} studies reveal an effect of EDCs on dental tissue, similar in appearance to molar incisor hypomineralization (MIH), defined by the presence of opacities and abnormalities in the translucency of the enamel, in one of the four first permanent molars.⁹⁰⁻⁹² The anomalies would be the result of the activity of the EDCs on ER present in the dental epithelium, increasing the proliferative activity of ameloblasts, affecting the quality of the enamel.

The detection of high concentrations of EDCs in exposed individuals, as well as the presence of morphological alterations in mineralized tissues, particularly teeth,^{47,53,59,63} may be relevant:

a) as a warning sign of chronic exposure to EDCs of certain populations at risk;

b) as an early marker of the presence of other systemic pathologies related to exposure to environmental contaminants;

c) contributing to the prevention of conditions such as obesity, diabetes⁹ or reproductive and behavioral disorders.⁸ In this way, the detection of pathologies such as MIH, frequently detected from 6 to 9 years of age and predominant in rural areas and with low socioeconomic status,⁹³ may be associated with exposure to substances contained in the pesticides commonly used in Chile.⁷⁵

It is interesting to note that sex, age, ethnicity/race, as well as the presence of certain physiological states (menopause), habits (smoking), or chronic pathologies (obesity and arthritis) would influence the effect of some EDCs. Thus, the effect of PFOA and PFOS would differ according to the sex of the individuals, probably due to differences between the hormonal mechanisms –and the excretion of these compounds–.⁹⁴

Regarding ethnic factors, the observed differences seem to reflect a certain “*biological fingerprint*” unique to each specific group of pregnant women, depending also on the route and source of exposure to EDCs (use of consumer products, diet, or environment),^{95,96} factors that seem to have an influence on fetal growth.^{97,98}

Regarding other modulating factors, such as the presence of chronic pathologies of inflammatory origin, the results still seem contradictory, not ruling out an association between the concentrations of some EDCs and the presence of osteoarthritis.⁹⁹ Likewise, the metabolic state of the exposed population seems to be a relevant factor, where high concentrations of EDCs could mainly affect the

bone health of obese individuals.⁵⁷

These results suggest a possible relationship between the presence of certain pre-existing chronic inflammatory processes and the magnitude of the damage observed by exposure to EDCs.

This is possibly the result of chemicals inducing inflammatory responses.¹⁰⁰ It is necessary to include the analysis of this aspect in future research. Some studies have suggested that the presence of high levels of several metabolites of EDCs in the urine of adult individuals has been related to the presence of gum disease, bone loss in the periodontal region or dental mobility,⁷³ consequently, it is relevant to analyze the effect of EDCs on periodontal tissues and their relationship with other chronic pathology of inflammatory origin such as periodontitis.

CONCLUSION.

In conclusion, the exposure of the population to EDCs in the environment, such as bisphenols or organophosphate and pyrethroid pesticides,¹⁰¹ as well as the evidence of the accumulation of these compounds affecting the development and health of children, particularly in agricultural areas,^{13,15,74,102} highlights the importance of financing and carrying out studies –epidemiological or experimental– to analyze the biological impact of EDCs in mineralized tissues of exposed populations, in order to reveal causal relationships between exposure to EDCs and the harmful effects observed, as well as their underlying pathophysiological mechanisms, particularly at the level of the dental-periodontal complex.

Conflict of interests:

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Not applicable.

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Authorship included participation in the conception of the study, writing and approval of the manuscript.

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