

IT WORKS FOR ME

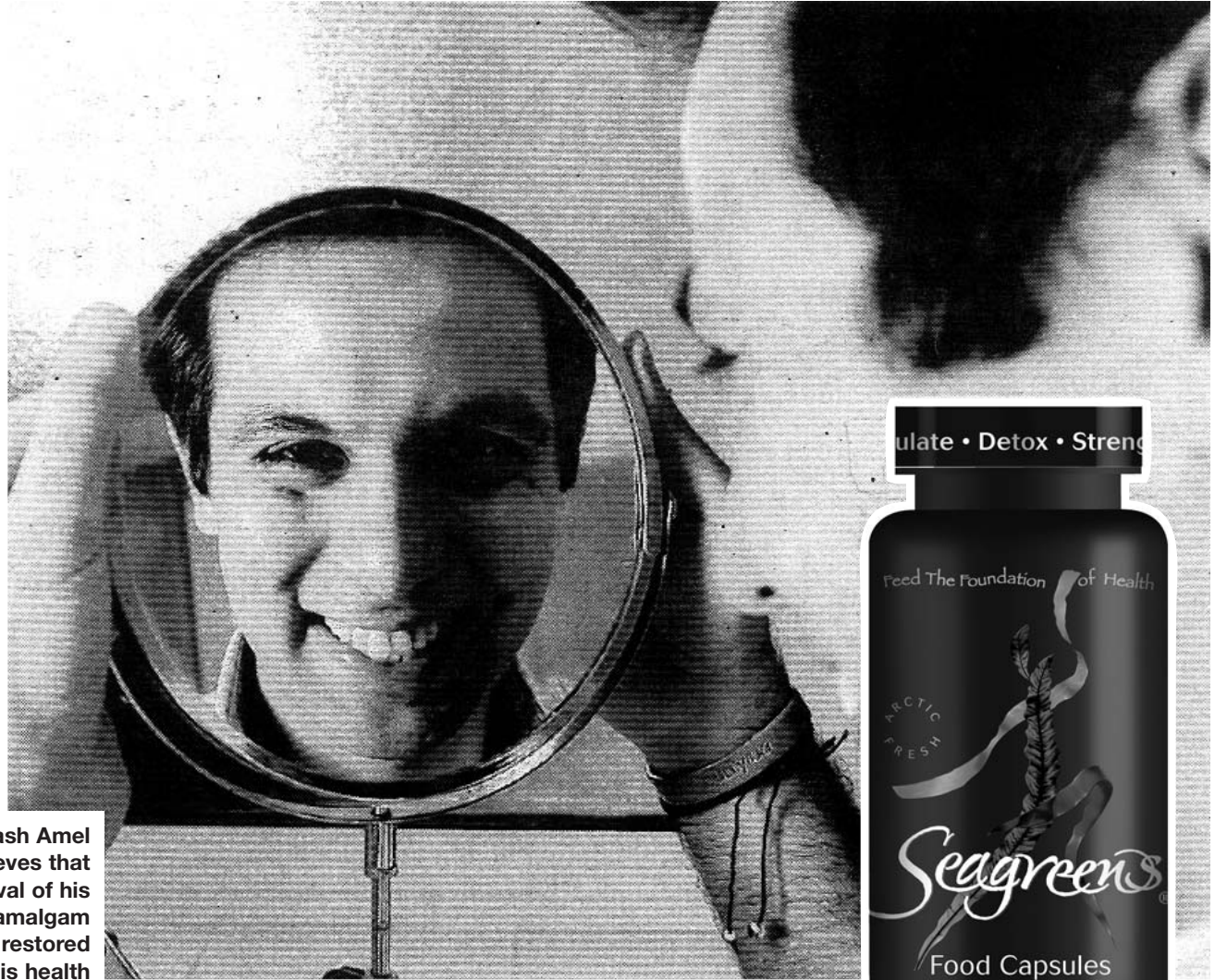
HOLISTIC DENTISTRY

Dental detox

Failing health and memory loss were halted after one man had new fillings, says **Emma Mahony**

When Arash Amel, a media consultant, started to suffer from memory lapses in May last year, he put it down to being tired and over-worked. The 29-year-old South Londoner would start sentences and then halfway through forget what he was talking about, which was especially embarrassing when making presentations to clients. But when his memory lapses degenerated into panic attacks, causing him to wake in the night with dizziness and nausea, he knew that something was seriously wrong.

"I started to develop food intolerances. I had a highly processed diet—junk food—and lots of coffee. But whatever I ate, even a carrot, would sit in my stomach like a rock." By the end of May, his panic attacks had become daily and his inability to eat properly meant that in six weeks he went from 67kg (10½st) to 57kg: "I couldn't eat, or work, or put together two sentences." He went to his GP for blood tests, but nothing showed up. Finally the doctor said: "I can only recommend either medication for depression or to see a clinical psychiatrist." Amel



Arash Amel believes that removal of his mercury amalgam fillings restored his health

felt he was being written off as a madman and that conventional medicine had failed him.

Looking on the internet, he saw that some of his symptoms matched those of people suffering from systemic candidiasis, a fungal growth in the digestive tract that causes an imbalance in the body. He put himself on a candida supplement programme, took probiotics and vitamins. He also saw a nutritionist, who offered a hair mineral analysis to test for deficiencies of essential minerals and toxic levels of harmful ones in his system. "The results showed that my zinc level was depleted, despite taking supplements, and, intriguingly, my mercury level was high."

Amel went back to the internet and found studies on sensitivity to mercury in amalgam fillings; interestingly he had undergone extensive dental treatment, including repairing a broken filling, three months before his symptoms started.

Mercury, a highly toxic metal, has been used in dental fillings since 1830 because it is fluid at room temperature and mixes easily to make a solid filling. Amalgam fillings, made from metals including silver, tin and nickel, contain more than 50 per cent mercury and are believed to be safe because the mercury



becomes inert when bonded with silver, tin, copper or zinc. In 1998 the Department of Health acknowledged that amalgam fillings may release mercury vapour, but in small amounts that pose no threat to health. While white “composite” fillings, which are harder to fit, are available privately, the NHS offers only mercury amalgams.

The British Dental Association (BDA) states: “The BDA takes its guidance on amalgam fillings from the Department of Health’s Toxicity Committee. Sensitivity to amalgam is rare, but if patients are concerned, they should contact their GP for a test.” A 1996 BDA factfile, however, put this rarity at 3 per cent of the population, or 1.75 million people in Britain today.

Having decided that mercury sensitivity was at the root of his problem, Amel found a holistic dentist, Dr Gareth Rhidian, to replace his fillings: “Gareth went through my case history, looked at my hair-test results and did an X-ray before removing the fillings, using a special system to filter the toxic mercury vapour.” There were also nutritional supplements to take during the process, including **Seagreens®**, vitamin C selenium and magnesium.

The removal of the seven amalgams took place over four months in four sessions and Amel admits, it has taken nearly a year for him to feel normal again, and his appetite did not return until three months into the treatment. However, the day of his first session, when the biggest filling was removed from his left jaw, he went home and cried. From that day many of the problems on his left side, such as migraines and stiff neck, disappeared.

Dr Rhidian, who qualified as a regular dental surgeon before becoming one of 60 members of the British Society for Mercury-Free Dentistry sees about 20 new patients a month with symptoms that may be mercury-related, such as depression, chronic fatigue and kidney problems.

While Amel believes that the removal of mercury amalgams helped him, Dr Rhidian is keen to keep a balanced view: “Can you prove that Arash’s sickness was down to mercury? I don’t know, but I do know that mercury is the second most toxic metal known and I believe that it should not be implanted into our bodies. However, I can’t say that removing it will resolve any condition or symptom not related to oral health.”

What is it?

HOLISTIC DENTISTRY is an understanding of how treatment of the teeth and jaws can affect the total health of an individual, and how the materials we place in our mouth can affect the immune system and other parts of the body. Holistic care integrates both conventional and complementary approaches, such as nutrition and homeopathy.

COSTS Initial consultation, including a low-dose radiation digital X-ray, is about £95. Removal of fillings and replacements starts from about £100.

CONTACT Dr Gareth Rhidian, Holistic Dental, Centre, Farnham Surrey (01252 820004), or visit www.mercury-free.co.uk. The British Society for Mercury Free Dentistry, PO Box 42606, London SW5 (helpline 020 8746 1773). Most private dental practices offer the newer white “composite” fillings.

WHAT’S THE EVIDENCE? DR GEORGE LEWITH

Can dental amalgams damage health?

This is a theoretical possibility. We know that mercury is a poison. Albert Kingman’s paper from the National Institute of Dental Research in the US, published in the *Journal of Dental Research*, 1998, measured mercury in urine in more than 1,000 healthy males and found that the amount in the urine is directly related to the number of amalgam fillings.

Is mercury unsafe for everyone?

Sven Enestrom, at the University of Linkoping in Sweden, suggests in the *Archives of Allergy and Immunology* (1995) that mercury probably affects only a small proportion of people but those susceptible are difficult to identify in the type of large population studies that are carried out.

The British Dental Association maintains that mercury is safe for all. However, this view may be

difficult to sustain in the long term as we can now test individuals for allergic reaction to mercury. This establishes if their immune systems might be susceptible to metal poisoning, but it’s not a test that dentists usually do in the UK.

So did amalgam removal help Arash Amel?

Dentistry, like all surgery probably has a high placebo effect, but as double-blind clinical trials would be unethical, you can never be sure that recovery such as Amel’s was because he was taken seriously and had an expensive dental (surgical) procedure, or whether the mercury really was poisoning him.

Should I have all my amalgam fillings removed?

This is the difficult bit. When 35 patients – with multiple sclerosis, eczema and thyroid disease – were evaluated pre and post-



amalgam removal by Jarmilla Prochazkova, from Prague (*Neuroendocrinology, letters 2004*), 70 per cent noticed a health improvement. This supports the view that heavy metals trigger illness but does not prove the case.

THE  TIMES

body & soul

Saturday October 29, 2005 ■ “Health is worth more than learning” Thomas Jefferson, 1743-1826

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