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Project Report Furniture Care Products

Contact

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1 Initial Situation

Solid wood furniture is not quite as durable as the robust material tends to suggest. Depending on whether the wood is varnished, oiled or waxed it may be more or less sensitive to dust, water and external influences. Over time the shine of wooden furniture fades and scratches and stains become more and more visible. Regular treatment with furniture care products helps to eliminate stains and surface scratches on wooden furniture and to restore the shine to faded wood.

Consequently, furniture care products are also quite widely used in many households. Many of these products are based on aliphatic hydrocarbons. If they were accidentally swallowed and then vomited they could cause serious damage to health. Due to their low viscosity (fluidity), very small amounts may even reach the respiratory system and the lungs. There they provoke chemical pneumonia, "aspiration pneumonia".

Products that present an aspiration hazard and which are supplied to the general public have to exhibit an appropriate hazard warning, have a childproof closure and be equipped with a tactile hazard statement.

As certain furniture care products that present an aspiration hazard allegedly do not fulfil these requirements, a manufacturer complained to the Zurich competence centre for chemicals. It was suggested that users could be endangered and competition could be distorted. The Zurich competence centre for chemicals subsequently requested the FOPH to clarify which furniture care products on the Swiss market might be affected.

In spite of the potential dangers, furniture care products may be considered as a relatively unproblematic product group based on the number and severity of the recorded cases of poisoning. In the study, "Comparison and Evaluation of Data on Poisoning"¹, it was stated that Tox Info Suisse received only 7 telephone calls per year per million inhabitants in regard to furniture cleaning and care products. 80% of the cases of poisoning with this product group proceed mildly or asymptotically and only 4.5% with moderate severity. Cases of severe or even fatal poisoning have not been reported as yet.

2 Procedure

The FOPH examined a total of 39 different furniture care products in regard to their aspiration hazard, childproof closure and tactile hazard statement. 30 Products were purchased in the retail trade or on the internet. 26 Products were examined and analysed by the Laboratory of the Directorate General of Customs. The remaining 13 products were evaluated only on the basis of their labelling and packaging.

The FOPH considers that the majority of the potentially aspiration hazardous furniture care products on the Swiss market have been assessed and no further systematic product sampling (campaigns) is required.

¹ <https://www.anmeldestelle.admin.ch/chem/de/home/themen/recht-wegleitungen/wegleitungen-interpretationshilfen/berichte-publikationen.html>

3 Tests

The following parameters were determined analytically:

1. Aliphatic hydrocarbon content
if this is less than 10% the product is classified as NOT aspiration toxic. No further analyses is required for the corresponding products.
2. Kinematic viscosity of products that comprise more than 10% aliphatic hydrocarbons
up to 20.5 mm²/s, the corresponding product is classified as aspiration toxic.
3. Additional observations
for example, content of allergenic fragrances (limonene)

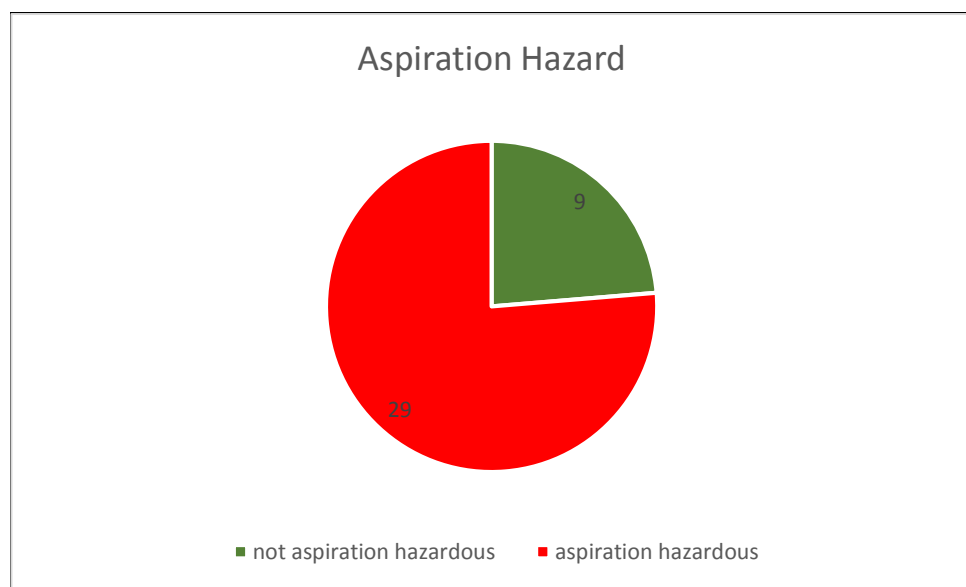
4 Results

The results for one product are still being evaluated. They are not taken into account in the following assessments.

4.1 Aspiration Hazard

29 of the 38 tested products are aspiration hazardous (76%). Of these, 13 (45%) are correctly classified or labelled, 16 (55 %) are not.

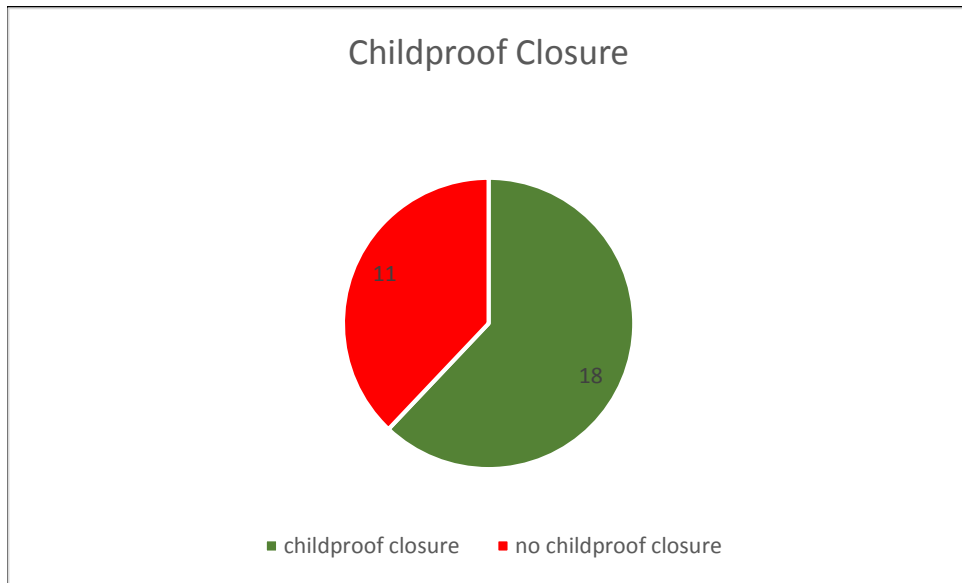
Some of the analysed products were opaque or cloudy. After some time (max. 4 – 5 days) these products exhibited a phase separation with a clear supernatant upper phase. In these cases the kinematic viscosity of the supernatant organic phase was determined. In everyday life it can be assumed that furniture care products are often left to stand before being used. Consequently, in accidents involving oral ingestion it is primarily the supernatant organic phase that is swallowed.



Only the 29 aspiration hazardous products are considered in the following chapters.

4.2 Childproof Closure

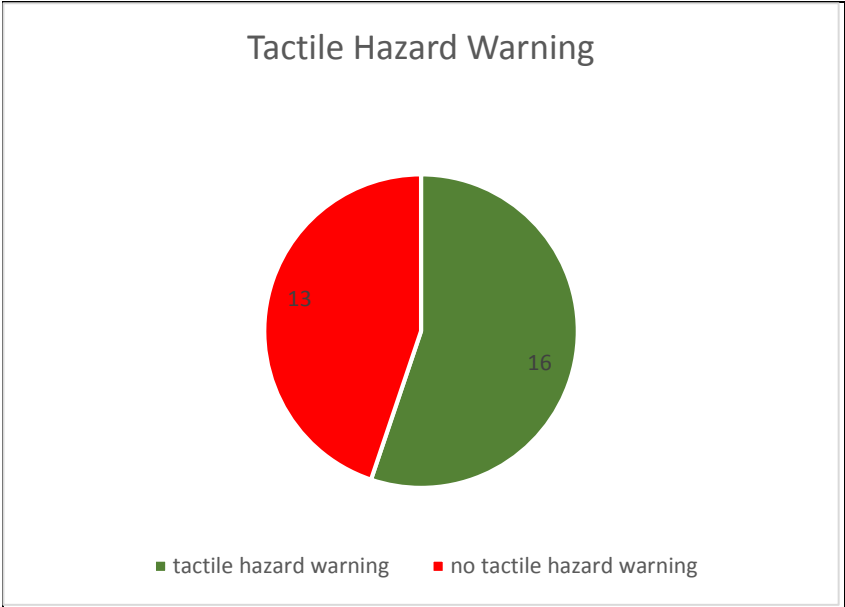
Aspiration hazardous products have to have a childproof closure. Of the 29 aspiration hazardous products, 18 (62%) had a childproof closure, 11 (38%) did not.



Even childproof closures do not offer absolute protection and in no circumstances replace the obligatory supervision and correct handling, which also include the secure storage of chemical products. Childproof closures mean that children under 4 years may only be delayed in opening containers. The relevant provisions stipulate that in a group of children aged between 42 and 51 months, 85% of the children must not be able to open a childproof closure within 5 minutes. This means that a childproof closure is rated as childproof even if 15% of the 42 to 51 month old children are able to open it. In comparison, 90% of a group of 50-70 year olds have to be able to open the closure within 5 minutes.

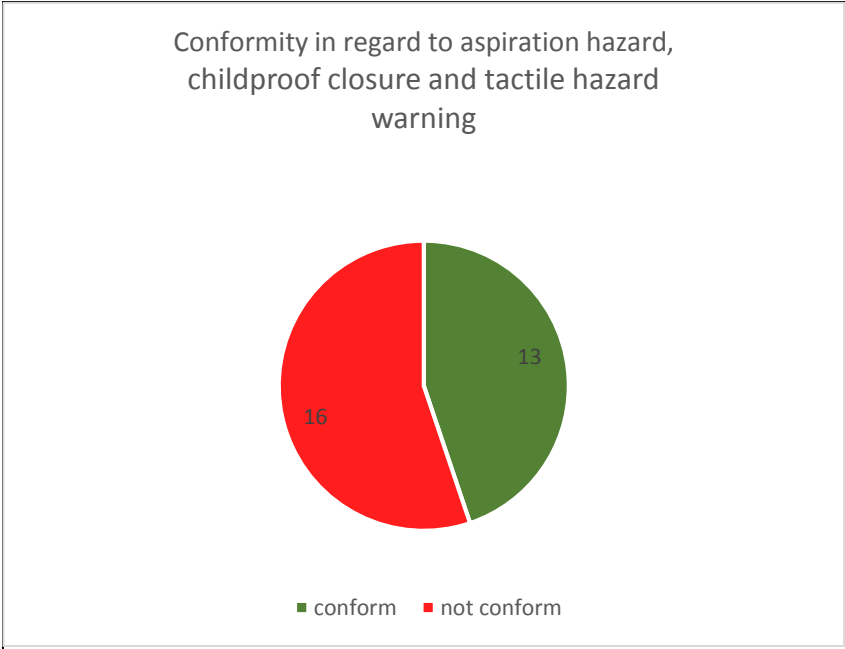
4.3 Tactile Hazard Warning

Aspiration hazardous products have to have a tactile hazard warning. Of the 29 examined aspiration hazardous products, 16 (55%) had a tactile hazard warning, 13 (45%) did not.



4.4 Product Conformity

Of the 29 aspiration hazardous furniture care products, 16 (55%) do not fulfil the requirements of the chemicals law in regard to classification/labelling (aspiration hazard), childproof closure or tactile hazard warning.



5 Additional Findings

Three furniture care products without hazard labelling possess such a high content of limonene that this alone would require them to be classified and labelled as hazardous. In each case they concern aspiration hazardous products that in regard to the aspiration hazard are not classified or labelled correctly.

6 Measures taken by the Enforcement Authorities

The products were not officially obtained from the manufacturers, but rather on the market. Consequently, it cannot be excluded that the collected products were remaining stocks in the shops. In the meantime the manufacturers may possibly have resolved any deficiencies and the products are even no longer placed on the market in their inadmissible form. It is also possible that products with identical tradenames from other manufacturers are marketed in accordance with the law.

6.1 Products with the Swiss Manufacturer on the Packaging

- The manufacturers were requested to remedy the deficiencies.
- The required corrections have been carried out or initiated by the manufacturer.

6.2 Products with the foreign Manufacturer on the Packaging

- The competent foreign enforcement authorities were informed by means of the information system of the European enforcement authorities (ICSMS).
- Potential importers were identified by means of customs queries. They were requested to check the legal conformity of their products and if necessary undertake corrective measures. According to the feedback received so far, the products have either been taken off the market or were never imported by the potential importers.
- Notifiers who had registered a product with the same name in the product register of the Notification Authority were requested to check the legal conformity of their products and if necessary undertake corrective measures. According to the feedback received so far, the products that were legally non-compliant have also been taken off the market.

6.3 Information

- The present project report is published in the Internet and made available to the public (Art. 28 para. 1 Chemicals legislation, SR 813.1).
- A column on the dangers of aspiration hazardous products was created, published on the FOPH website and sent to the media and to interested parties.

6.4 Additional Measures

As the present project has already tested most of the potentially hazardous products marketed in Switzerland, it is the view of the FOPH that no further Swiss-wide campaign is required. However, in the context of their market surveillance, the cantonal enforcement authorities should continue to pay attention to furniture care products. Suspect preparations are generally clear liquids, or in the case of cloudy products, form a phase separation.

7 Conclusions

For a large number of aspiration hazardous products the self-regulation was carried out inadequately:

- Of 29 products, 16 (55%) were not correctly classified or labelled
- Of 29 products, 13 (45%) were not correctly packaged (missing childproof closure and/or tactile hazard warning)

We consider that the measures taken are appropriate in order to ensure as quickly as possible the legal conformity of furniture care products. This ensures that the consumer in Switzerland obtains products that are safe when used properly. Due to the high number of complaints a follow-up campaign will be carried out in the medium term. This is intended to determine whether the corrective measures have been comprehensively introduced.

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Annex Results

The results for one product are still being evaluated.

Non-hazardous aspiration products (no requirement for a childproof closure or tactile hazard warning)

1. Arbeitsplattenöl
2. Biofa Arbeitsplattenöl
3. CLOU Teaköl
4. estalin polisch
5. estalin Spezial hell
6. estalin Teak-Oil
7. Green Line Zebra Pflege Teak-Öl hellbraun
8. Pial Möbelpolitur
9. pronto Möbelpflege-Balsam

Aspiration hazardous products with a childproof closure and tactile hazard warning

1. CLOU fernol Möbelpolitur dunkel
2. CLOU fernol Möbelpolitur hell
3. CLOU Holzöl
4. Knuchel Farben SILASAN Teak-Oel
5. Mellerud Holz-Öl
6. Mellerud Teak Pflege-Öl
7. RENUWELL Möbel Öl
8. RENUWELL Möbel Regenerator
9. Starwax Huile Rénovatrice
10. Ultrament Gartenholz-Öl
11. vepool Möbelpolitur dunkel
12. vepool Möbelpolitur hell
13. vepool teak Intensiv-Pflege

Aspiration hazardous products with a childproof closure and tactile hazard warning but without appropriate labelling

The data on the packaging for each manufacturer are listed below. WARNING! It is possible that products of the same name with different manufacturer data are correctly on the market. If in the meantime the manufacturer has resolved the deficiency, then products with the same name with the same manufacturer may also be correctly on the market.

1. Liberon Teaköl
LIBERON F
39210 Domblans
France
2. just Universalpolitur Furniture Polish
JUST International AG
9428 Walzenhausen
3. Knuchel Farben Wenge-Imprägnieröl
Knuchel Farben AG
4537 Wiedlisbach

Aspiration hazardous products with a childproof closure but without tactile hazard warning and appropriate labelling

The data on the packaging for each manufacturer are listed below. WARNING! It is possible that products of the same name with different manufacturer data are correctly on the market. If in the meantime the manufacturer has resolved the deficiency, then products with the same name with the same manufacturer may also be correctly on the market.

1. Holzpflegeöl Complex Ora
Josef Schellhorn GmbH
6334 Schwoich
Austria
2. V33 Öl Gartenmöbel
V33 FRANCE
39210 DOMBLANS
France

Aspiration hazardous products without a childproof closure, tactile hazard warning and appropriate labelling

The data on the packaging for each manufacturer are listed below. WARNING! It is possible that products of the same name with different manufacturer data are correctly on the market. If in the meantime the manufacturer has resolved the deficiency, then products with the same name with the same manufacturer may also be correctly on the market.

1. BABÉRA Anti-kratzer
Dr. Weber & Co. GmbH
23566 Lübeck
Germany
2. BIONATURA Möbelbalsam
Schweizer-Effax GmbH
48356 Nordwalde
Germany
3. LUCIDO Möbelpflegemittel
RUWEX AG
8352 Rätterschen
4. Antrolin Möbelpolitur
LUHMO Vertrieb
4105 Biel Benken
5. BAOLIN Pflegemittel
BAO-Chemie
46201 Bottrob
Germany
6. Bianas Möbelpolitur
Bianas AG
4442 Diepflingen
7. Livos Dryaden-Politur
LIVOS
29559 Wrestedt
Germany
8. Livos Alis-Teak-Oel
LIVOS
29559 Wrestedt
Germany
9. KUNOS - Naturöl-Siegel farblos
LIVOS
29559 Wrestedt
Germany
10. MELDOS - Naturharz-Hartöl farblos
LIVOS
29559 Wrestedt
Germany

11. ARDVOS – Holzöl
LIVOS
29559 Wrestedt
Germany