

CONTENT

Authors	6
Acknowledgements	8
Papers discussed	9
Nomenclature	11
List of figures	18
List of tables	21
Introduction	23
CHAPTER I Review of literature	25
 1.1 Endocrine disruptors	25
1.1.1 <i>What are endocrine disruptors and endocrine active substances?</i>	26
1.1.2 <i>Action mechanisms of endocrine disruptors</i>	26
1.1.3 <i>Origins of endocrine disruptors</i>	29
1.1.4 <i>The routes of exposure to endocrine disruptors</i>	34
1.1.5 <i>Endocrine disruptors and their possible impacts on health – reproductive and hormone system</i>	37
 1.2 Potentially toxic elements	39
1.2.1 <i>What are heavy metals?</i>	39
1.2.2 <i>MERCURY</i>	40
1.2.2.1 <i>Chemical and physical properties</i>	40
1.2.2.2 <i>Exposure</i>	41
1.2.2.3 <i>Biological properties</i>	45
1.2.2.4 <i>Toxicokinetics</i>	45
1.2.2.5 <i>Effects on the organism – reproductive toxicity</i>	46
1.2.3 <i>CADMIUM</i>	48
1.2.3.1 <i>Chemical and physical properties</i>	48
1.2.3.2 <i>Exposure</i>	50
1.2.3.3 <i>Biological properties</i>	51
1.2.3.4 <i>Toxicokinetics</i>	51
1.2.3.5 <i>Effects on the organism – reproductive toxicity</i>	52
1.2.4 <i>NICKEL</i>	57
1.2.4.1 <i>Chemical and physical properties</i>	57
1.2.4.2 <i>Exposure</i>	58
1.2.4.3 <i>Biological properties</i>	59
1.2.4.4 <i>Toxicokinetics</i>	60
1.2.4.5 <i>Effects on the organism – reproductive toxicity</i>	61
1.2.5 <i>IRON</i>	65
1.2.5.1 <i>Chemical and physical properties</i>	65

1.2.5.2 Exposure	66
1.2.5.3 Biological properties	67
1.2.5.4 Toxicokinetics	68
1.2.5.5 Effects on the organism – reproductive toxicity	74
1.2.6 COPPER	76
1.2.6.1 Chemical and physical properties	76
1.2.6.2 Exposure	77
1.2.6.3 Biological properties	78
1.2.6.4 Toxicokinetics	80
1.2.6.5 Effects on the organism – reproductive toxicity	82
1.3 Human adrenocortical carcinoma (NCI-H295R) cell line	85
1.3.1 <i>Origin, development and establishment of the cell line</i>	85
1.3.2 <i>Growth conditions of the cell line</i>	86
1.3.3 <i>Intracellular characteristic and physiological properties of the cell line</i>	88
1.4 Steroidogenesis	93
1.4.1 <i>How do steroid hormones act?</i>	94
1.4.2 Progesterone	99
1.4.3 Testosterone	101
1.4.4 Estradiol	102
CHAPTER II The aim of the study	105
CHAPTER III Material and methods	106
3.1 Cell culture	106
3.2 <i>In vitro exposure</i>	108
3.3 Cell viability	109
3.4 Hormone measurement	110
3.5 ICP-OES elemental analysis	112
3.6 Transmission electron microscopy	113
3.7 Statistical analysis	114
CHAPTER IV Results	115
4.1 Mercury	115
4.1.1 <i>Cell viability</i>	115
4.1.2 <i>Sexual steroid production</i>	116
4.2 Cadmium	119
4.2.1 <i>Cell viability</i>	119
4.2.2 <i>Sexual steroid production</i>	119
4.3 Nickel	123
4.3.1 <i>Cell viability</i>	123
4.3.2 <i>Sexual steroid production</i>	123

4.4 Iron	127
4.4.1 <i>Cell viability</i>	127
4.4.2 <i>Sexual steroid production</i>	127
4.4.3 <i>Quantitative determination of the iron in the NCI-H295R cells</i>	130
4.4.4 <i>Ultrastructure of the NCI-H295R cell line exposed to FeSO₄.7H₂O</i>	130
4.5 Copper	138
4.5.1 <i>Cell viability</i>	138
4.5.2 <i>Sexual steroid production</i>	138
4.5.3 <i>Quantitative determination of the copper in the NCI-H295R cells</i>	141
4.5.4 <i>Ultrastructure of the NCI-H295R cell line exposed to CuSO₄.5H₂O</i>	141
CHAPTER V Discussion	149
5.1 Mercury in relation to sexual steroid hormones (NCI-H295R)	149
5.2 Cadmium in relation to sexual steroid hormones (NCI-H295R)	152
5.3 Nickel in relation to sexual steroid hormones (NCI-H295R)	156
5.4 Iron in relation to sexual steroid hormones (NCI-H295R)	159
5.4.1 <i>Content of iron in the NCI-H295R cell line</i>	162
5.4.2 <i>Ultrastructure of the cells after exposure to FeSO₄.7H₂O</i>	163
5.5 Copper in relation to sexual steroid hormones (NCI-H295R)	165
5.5.1 <i>Content of copper in the NCI-H295R cell line</i>	167
5.5.2 <i>Ultrastructure of the cells after exposure to CuSO₄.5H₂O</i>	168
CHAPTER VI Conclusions and Recommendation for practice	169
CHAPTER VII References	175
Abstract	227