



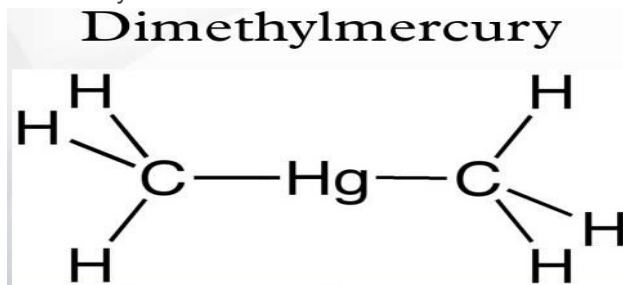
Karen Wetterhahn

Scott Wire CHEM 3142

- Dr. Karen Wetterhahn was a leader in conducting research on how metals initiate cancer and other metal-induced diseases at the molecular level. However, her biggest contribution to science was the eventual cause of her death: toxic mercury poisoning. This is because on August 14th, 1996, she was preparing a sample of dimethylmercury when several drops fell onto her latex glove covered hand and seeped through the gloves and her skin, into her body. Several months later, on June 8, 1997, Dr. Karen Wetterhahn died from toxic mercury poisoning. Many people knew mercury was poisonous, but not the extent to which it was lethal. While unfortunate, Dr. Wetterhahn's untimely death shed some light on
- Outside of the lab, Dr. Wetterhahn co-founded Dartmouth's Women in Science Project (WISP), fighting to remove the barriers in science for future women who were following the same path as her, and she even became the first woman to serve as the associate dean for sciences at Dartmouth in 1989.
- Dr. Wetterhahn got her Bachelor's degree from St. Lawrence University in 1970 and got her PhD from Columbia University in 1975, where she then joined their faculty for a year before moving on to be an assistant professor of chemistry at Dartmouth in 1976.

Fictional Nobel Prize Story:

The year is 1997 and Dr. Karen Wetterhahn has recently recovered from an unforeseen illness that she contracted a few months earlier. She tries to identify the causes of her illness as she is sure she contracted it from her experimental work. She then realized the cause might've been mercury poisoning, but a nonlethal dose. She then ran some tests and discovered that mercury can leak through latex gloves in as little as 15 seconds and the damages done may be irreversible. She took these findings and presented them to the public, which she was rewarded with the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for her latest discovery that'll save many lives in the future. Dr. Wetterhahn, now retired at 76, served as the president of Dartmouth University after receiving her Nobel Prize, while continuing her research into toxic metals and their role in cancer and other diseases, as well as fighting for equal opportunities for women in the sciences. Outside of her academic excellence, Dr. Wetterhahn is accompanied by her loving husband and two children, and she enjoys spending time with her family and friends.



Citations:

1. <https://www.acs.org/pressroom/presspacs/2022/acs-presspac-june-15-2022/looking-back-on-chemist-karen-wetterhahns-legacy-25-years-after-her-death.html>
2. <https://www.niehs.nih.gov/research/supported/centers/srp/training/wetterhahn>
3. <https://awis.org/historical-women/karen-wetterhahn/>