



Introduction



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Hearing is one of the perceptual process by which man is continually being informed about his environment and subserved for the highest level of communication (Gibb et al., 1976) .

Ototoxicity may be defined as the tendency of certain therapeutic agents and other chemicals to cause functional impairment and cellular degeneration of the tissues of the inner ear and especially of the cochlear and vestibular divisions of the 8th cranial nerve (Hawkins, 1976) .

With the control of acute inorganic lead (pb) toxicity in many workforces exposed to (pb) over the past few decades, attention has shifted to chronic or sub-clinical disorders attributable to(pb) exposute (Ehrlich et al., 1998).

Lead intoxication in human beings has been documented since the second century B.C. (Perazella, 1996).

The risk for lead exposure and lead poisoning is a persistent problem for some workers and is an important issue in both industrialized and developing counteries (Morb, 1996).

Lead is known to be toxic to both humans and experimental animals and the major risk is toxicity to the nervous system (Kovala et al., 1997).

It may also cause adverse health effects on the hematopoietic system, and the kidneys (Birjesson et al., 1997).

Exposure to lead is prevalent in Egypt mainly due to leaded gasoline, water pipes, food contaminationetc, this adds an extra-hazards to occupational exposure (smelter workers, printers, painters and battery factory workers) (EL- Samra et al., 1992).