

"Overview of thermal muds in French thermalism"

French Association of
Hydrothermal Techniques



AFTh is an association of specialists with scientific and academic interests in spa therapy techniques. Engineers, technicians, managers, suppliers, manufacturers, consultants and scientists.

Activities:

- organisation of an annual technical conference related to spa resort management;
- publication of an annual bulletin featuring the proceedings of the technical conference;
- selection process and award of an annual prize for technical innovation;
- participation in spa industry working groups on health and technical matters.

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"Overview of thermal muds in French thermalism"



This overview is based on a survey of 90 spa resorts, all members of the CNETh French spa industry union.

The survey was conducted in 2013 and over half of members (56) responded to an online questionnaire that reviewed the same content of a previous survey held the first time in 2004.

The survey content focused on:

- the types of muds used by therapeutic indicator;
- substrates used;
- therapy provision methods (mud packs or poultices);
- production methods (extemporaneous or matured);
- uses (recycled or single-use) and use characteristics (weight, temperature, etc.);
- the final destination of these muds;
- improvements made by various spa resorts and related investment.

"Overview of thermal muds in French thermalism"

Abbreviations

The main therapeutic indications in French thermalism

RH: Rheumatology

UD: Urinary disorders

DER: Dermatology

DD: Digestive disorders

RT: Respiratory tract

PHL: Phlebology

NEU: Neurology

CDD: Child development disorders

BMM: Buccolingual mucous membrane disorders



Definitions and uses of muds



4 origins, 2 types of use covering 3 methods of use

Categories Natural or Pelose Matured or Peloid Extemporaneous Regenerated

Uses



Mud packs

Poultices

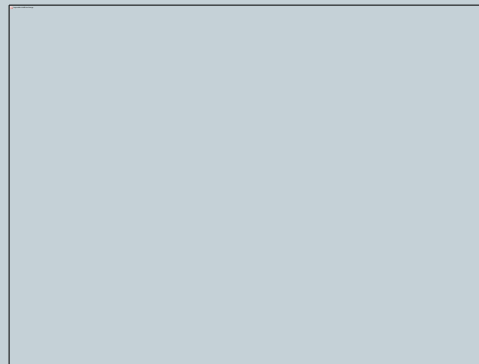


Procedures for use

Collective

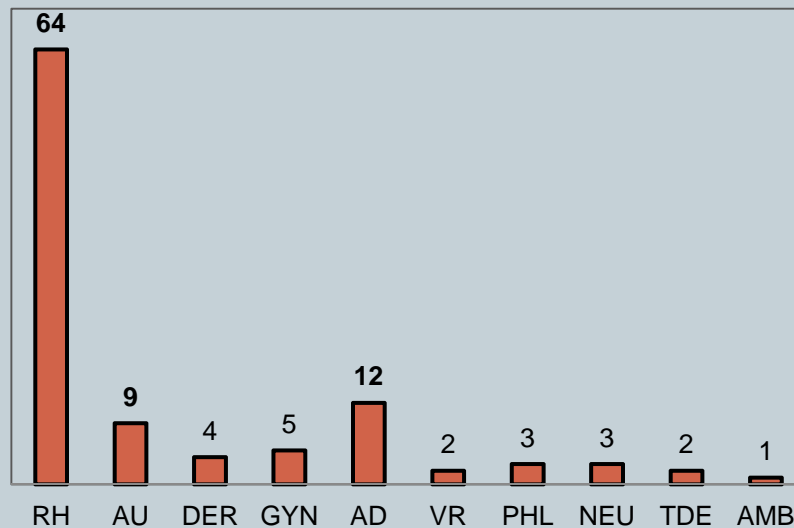
Individualised

Single (use)

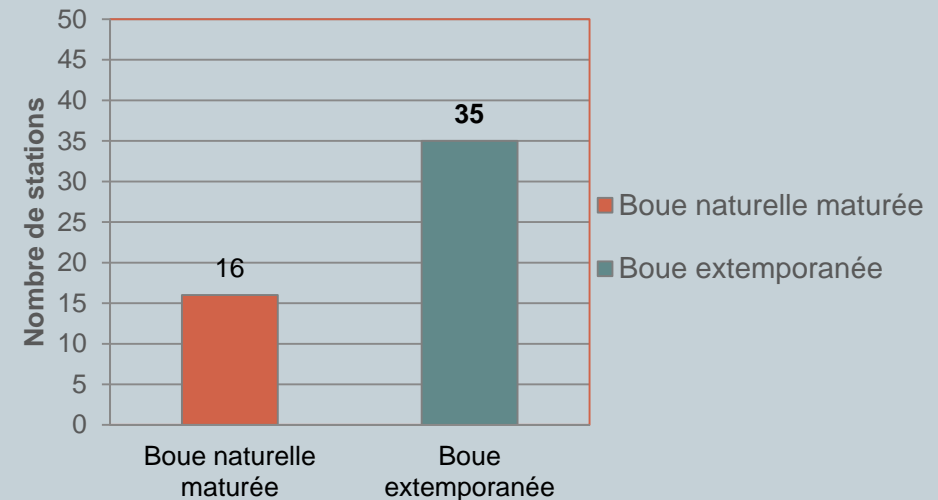


Thermal mud uses in 2013

Therapeutic indications using muds



Type of mud used



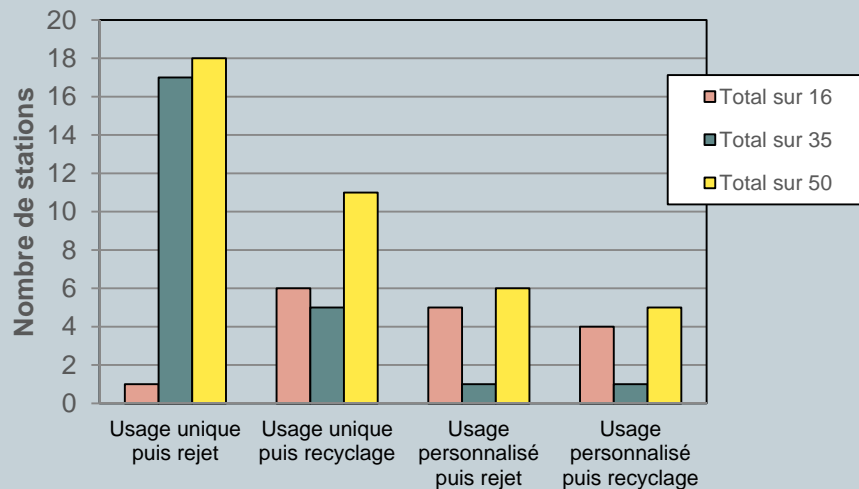
Muds are used for all therapeutic procedures
RH treatment is the most common

Extemporaneous mud is still the most common form (68%) but the use of natural matured mud is regaining popularity. Extemporaneous muds accounted for 92% of treatments in 2004



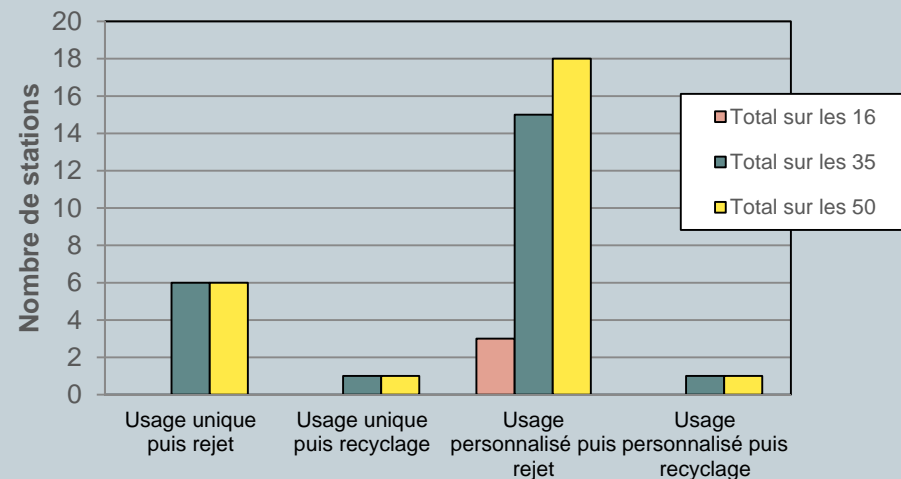
Thermal mud uses in 2013

Mud packs cycle



Single-use disposable applications remain the most common form for extemporaneous muds
 Recycling **seems to have been abandoned** for extemporaneous muds
 Matured muds are **generally subject to single-use then recycled**
 Matured muds **are increasingly popular for personalised treatments**

Poultices cycle

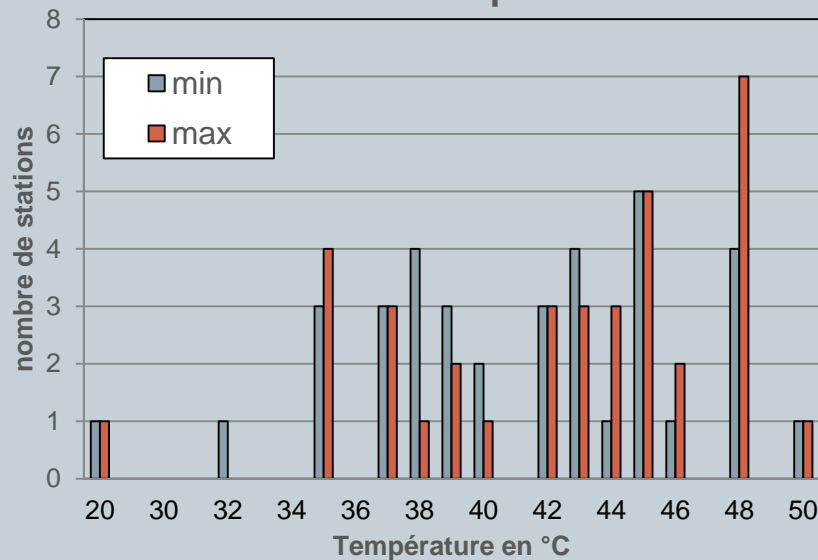


Personalised use is still the most common application for poultices
There has been a rise in single-use
Recycling has fallen

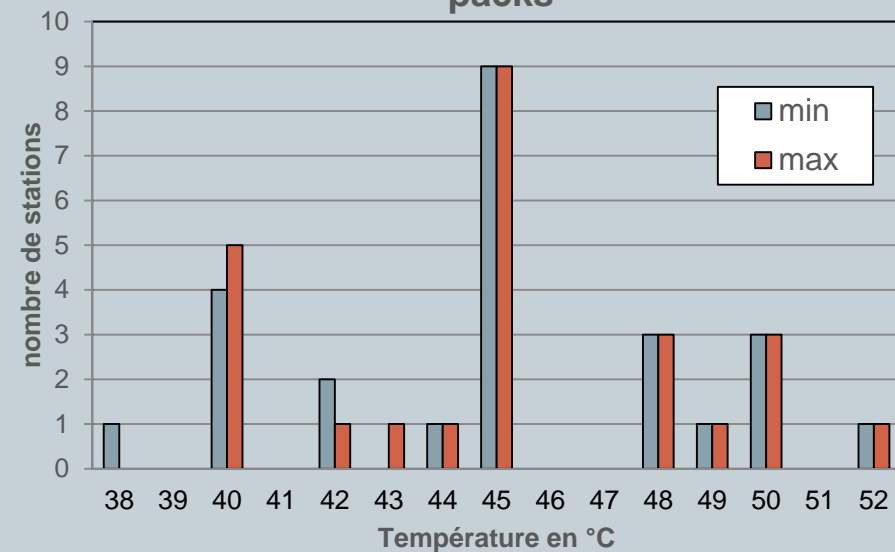
Thermal mud uses in 2013



Temperature of application for individual poultices



Temperature of application for mud packs



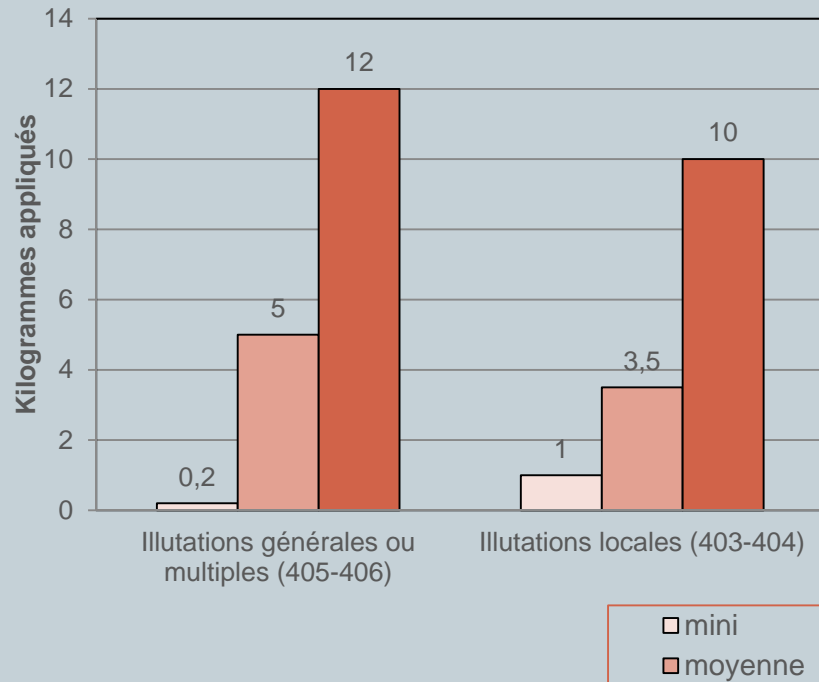
The temperature range when using mud packs has shifted (to between 35°C and 50°C). **The temperatures used are cooler than 2004.**

The temperature range when using poultices is the same, **although average temperature has dropped** (45°C, 50°C and 42°C were the most frequently used temperatures in 2004)



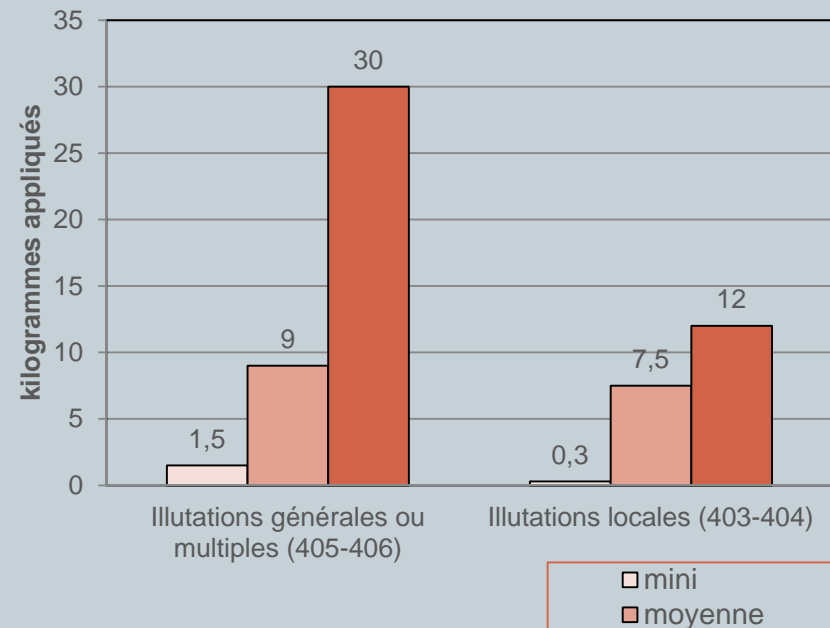
Thermal mud uses in 2013

Weight of extemporaneous muds



The **average weight of mud applications has dropped** (by 1 kg for general applications and 0.5 kg for local applications)
 The **maximum weight of general mud packs has mostly fallen** (12 compared to 18)
 The weight for **locally applied mud packs has risen** (10 compared to 8)

Weight of natural matured muds

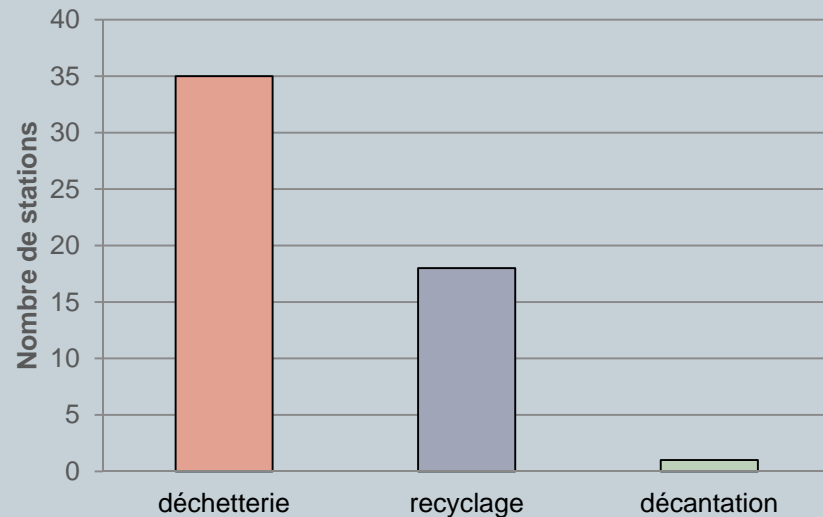


The **average weight of general applications has fallen by 75%** (36 kg in 2004 compared to 9 kg in 2013)
 The **maximum weight has dropped by 10 kg** (40 kg in 2004)
 Matured muds were not used for locally applied mud packs in 2004

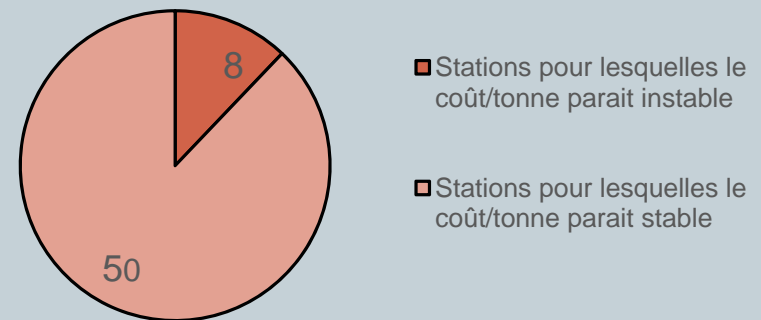
Thermal mud uses in 2013



Muds disposal methods



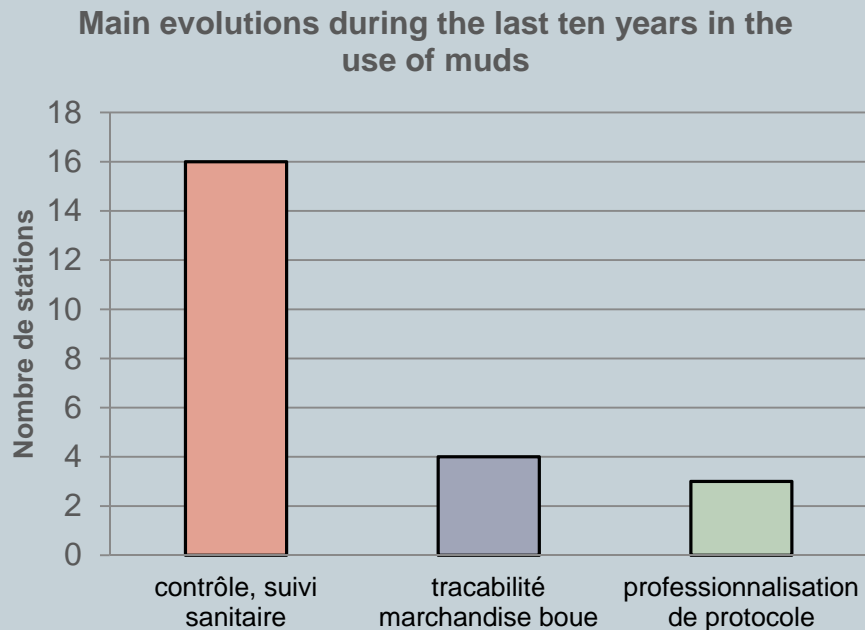
Cost evolution of mud disposal



Of the 53 spa resorts that responded to this question:
66% send their **used mud to a disposal facility**
18 resorts **recycle their mud, i.e. 34%**
Just 1 uses a settling tank

Cost is the main issue evoked when disposing of mud
Most spa resorts (86%) judged the cost to be **stable**
14% thought it was **unstable, seeing their costs rise**

Thermal mud uses in 2013



“Balaruc Les Bains” innovation
AFTH Innovation Award Winner 2014

23 spa resorts responded to this question
The main change stated relates to **health checks and monitoring of muds**
The mud cycle is now part of quality standard procedures (see “Aquacert” certification)

The “**liquid mud dispersal bed**” fitted with distribution pipes pours a blend of natural clay and spa water (72.8%) over joints to be treated according to medical prescriptions. The mud is kept at a temperature of 42°C for the 13-minute treatment session.

Thermal mud uses in 2013



Main conclusions of the study comparing 2013 to 2004:

- rheumatology is still from far away the most widely used therapeutic indication for the use of mud;
- extemporaneous muds remain the most common applications despite a decreasing trend;
- single-use applications still dominate while recycling is decreasing for mud packs;
- mud application temperatures and amounts used per patient are on a decreasing trend;
- the main final destination for mud is disposal while recycling is on the rise;
- there has been major investment, mainly to safeguard the safety and technical management standards of substrates;
- standout innovations have been made to healthcare units and distribution networks, together with changes made to the substrates used.

=> This study shows the interest of a regular assessment to get a picture of the current uses and to identify the main trends of the practices in mud therapy.