

## **Pattern of poisoning cases reported to the national poison centre of Malaysia: the second five-year report**

Azaharudin AA, Haslina H, Asdariah M, AI. Fathelrahman, Razak L.

*National Poison Centre, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Minden, Penang, Malaysia.*

**Objective:** The purpose of the current study was to describe the pattern of poisoning inquiries during the second 5-year period (2001-2005), and to compare the demographic characteristics in relation to substances implicated and circumstances of poisoning. **Method:** Data were analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive analyses like frequencies and percentages were used. Chi-square statistic was used to test differences between groups where ever applicable. **Result:** During the five-year period, the centre recorded 3057 poisoning exposures. The number of poisoning cases reported showed an annual increase with an average of 611 inquiries per year. The majority of these poisoning exposures involved adults (70%) and more than half of them were males (57%). The highest proportion of implicated toxic substances involved agrochemicals (38.3%), followed by pharmaceuticals (26.1%), household products (20.5%), industrial chemicals (8.9%), natural toxin (3.6%) and others (7.8%). Of all the poisoning cases, more than half (52.5%) were intentional, 29.5% unintentional and 17.4% unknown. For cases involving chemicals, males were more predominant, while females were mostly involved in pharmaceutical-related poisonings. By ethnic comparison, Indians constituted the majority of cases exposed to agrochemicals and household products, while the Chinese represented the greatest proportion of those who were exposed to pharmaceuticals.

**Conclusion:** The National Poison Centre of Malaysia had previously produced it first 5 year (1995-2001) report on poisoning trends based on inquiries received by the centre. The present study showed a trend towards increasing rates of reported exposures with predominant cases of adults, males, chemical toxicities and intentional mode. Among ethnic groups, there were variations in the implicated agents and circumstances of exposures.