

## **Home: The Store House of Poisons**

Bhalla A (1), Suri V (1), Mahi S (1), Sharma N (1), Singh S (1). 1. Department of Internal medicine, PGIMER, Chandigarh

**Introduction** : Majority of the cases with poisoning reporting to us are suicidal in nature and pesticides account for majority of the poisoning in our setup, however a person may use anything at his disposal once he is determined to end his life. Some of these agents are easily available at home making them ideal candidates for suicidal attempts. **Methods** : We retrospectively looked at all the patients presenting to medical emergency with attempted suicide over last 3 years and tried to identify the agents available at home for easy accessibility. Although pesticides are also easily available at home in rural areas, we excluded them from the final analysis in our patients. The agents broadly were divided into pesticides (organophosphates and aluminium phosphide), house hold compounds and unknown. The demographic details were noted and the compound ingested was confirmed based on history and physical examination. The cases with exposure to methyl alcohol and toxic gases were excluded from the analysis as these were mostly accidental exposure. **Results** : A total of 999 patients presented to the medical emergency with suspected poisoning. The mean age was  $28 \pm 10.8$  years. 78% of the patients had consumed the agents for suicidal purpose and 22% claimed to have as accidental exposure. Out of these in 107 cases the compound ingested was unknown. 607 patients had exposure to pesticides out of which 58% were organophosphates. 285 patients had used the agents available at home. Out of these 36% were drugs, with sedative hypnotics being the commonest 60%, followed by 15% antiepileptics and 10% anti depressants. This was followed by corrosives in 29.5%, majority being toilet cleaners. This was followed by rhodenticides in 19.6%. Plant poisons, hydrocarbons, pyrethroids and copper sulphate constituted around 6% each of all the cases. There was no mortality with exposure to these compounds however morbidity was maximum with corrosives and copper sulphate. Majority (90%) of these patients were discharged after observation in the emergency outpatient within 48 hours. **Conclusions** : Easy availability of potentially toxic compounds at home makes these compounds potential candidates for inducing self harm. Although mortality is minimum but some agents can serious morbidity.