

Profile of Childhood Poisoning- A PICU Experience

Jat KR (1), Singhi S (1), Jayashree M (1). 1. Division of Pediatric Intensive Care, Advanced Pediatric Centre, Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh, INDIA

Introduction : Poisoning in children is a medical emergency and preventable cause of morbidity and mortality. Knowledge about the nature, magnitude and regional peculiarities of the problem is necessary for management. **Objective** : To determine the clinical profile and outcome of children with poisoning admitted to the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) of a tertiary care hospital in North India. **Materials and Methods** : Case records of 56 children admitted to PICU with acute poisoning from January 2006 to June 2008 were analyzed retrospectively with respect to demographic profile, time to presentation, PRISM score, clinical features, investigations, therapeutic measures, outcome and complications. **Results** : Of the total 1228 PICU admissions during the study period, 56 (4.5%) were due to acute poisoning. The median age of patients was 2 years (range 0.25 to 11 years) with boy to girls' ratio of 2.3:1. Majority of the children (64.3%) were toddlers (1 to 3 years). Kerosene and drugs (25% each) were the most common causes followed by insecticides (23.2%), corrosives (10.7%), carbolic acid (3.5%) and 1 each of botulism, naphthalene, diesel, alcohol, maduramycin, benzyl benzoate and aluminium phosphide. Drugs included were iron (7), antiepileptics (2), dapsone (2), and isoniazid, opioid and multiple drugs (1 each). Almost all (98.2%) poisoning were accidental in nature. The median time to presentation was 10 hours (range 2 to 120 hours) with a mean PRISM I score of 10.2 (range 0-43). Presenting symptoms were vomiting (42.8%), altered sensorium (23.2%) and respiratory distress (21.4%). Eighteen (32.1%) patients had abnormal chest x-ray, which was mainly pneumonitis. Twenty two (39.2%) patients had oxygen requirement, of which 9 (40.9%) required mechanical ventilation. Antidote was instituted for 22 (39.2%) patients. Two (3.5%) patients' died; 1 each due to kerosene induced ARDS and maduramycin poisoning. Twenty two (39.2%) developed complications of which 8 had PICU care related complications. **Conclusion** : The trends of poisoning noted in our study are similar to those previously reported from our country. Kerosene and drugs were the most common causative agents. Nearly half of the patients, who required oxygen support, were mechanically ventilated indicating more severe symptoms. Mortality is reduced with timely PICU care.