

What is the First Priority? Forgotten Role of Case Finding in Methanol Outbreaks

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Objective : Many outbreaks of methyl alcohol poisoning have occurred in the world. Early identification and prompt management is of prime importance in these unfortunate patients. Onset of symptoms of methanol poisoning can be delayed several days after drinking adulterated alcohols depending in part, on the methanol dose ingested (1). Thus, the early cases of people who became sick quickly after drinking the methanol is a harbinger for more cases to come. In some Islamic countries, the fear of punishment could cause late presentation even though patient confidentiality is maintained (2). Due to this fact, toxicologists, ED physicians and other health care professionals need to pay attention and prepare accordingly. This preparedness should focus in ED active case finding, when the first patients would arrive, to avoid further morbidity and mortality. The aim of this study was to evaluate case finding in methanol outbreaks. **Methods** : The key word of "Methanol" OR "Methyl alcohol" AND "poisoning" OR "intoxication" AND "Epidemi*" OR "Outbreak" OR "Mass" was searched using the scholar Google search engines to identify all English relevant papers in medicine and pharmacology science in order to find out if in these articles active case finding were pointed basically. **Results** : The probe produced 608 unduplicated hints on the search for sites having mentioned key words. Less than 10 articles recommend the policy of active case finding in outbreaks. **Conclusion** : Mass methanol poisoning occurs globally and are a notable type of chemical public health disaster that severely stress hospitals and requires a huge investment of resources to salvage as many patients as possible. So case finding should initiate actively to minimize the morbidity and also mortality of outbreaks while some health care providers wouldn't naturally do that. This is possible by finding out the patients who recently drink contaminated products and may become comatose or blind in the few next hours. This important term should take into consideration for teaching the health care professionals. Authors should firmly emphasize case and source finding through patients and media in their teaching materials. A lapse of time may, of course, lead to irrecoverable consequences. **References** : 1. American Academy of Clinical Toxicology, Practice Guidelines on the Treatment of Methanol Poisoning. J Toxicol Clin Toxicol 2002; 40(4): 415- 446. 2. Hassanian-Moghaddam H, Pajoumand A, Dadgar SM, Shadnia Sh. Prognostic Factors In Methanol Poisoning. Hum Exp Toxicol 2007; 26(7):583-586.