

## ACUTE POISONING IN CHILDREN OF NORTHEAST IRAN

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### **Introduction: Objective:**

Drugs and chemicals are readily available in Iran and also toxic plants and virulence animals exist in most parts of this country including northeast, therefore acute poisonings are common in this region. Acute Poisonings in children are mostly accidental and can be prevented if they are recognized. It was thus aimed to study epidemiology of acute poisonings in children in Mashhad Medical Toxicology Research Centre, the only referral centre in Northeast Iran.

### **Methods:**

This was a prospective cross sectional study from 21st March 2002 till the end of 20<sup>th</sup> March 2004. All children with aged from newborn to 15 years old who referred to the centre were included. The data were collected by using a questionnaire consisting demographic and all other relevant parameters. The collected data were analyzed by SPSS software version 11.5.

### **Results:**

Of 18,292 patients were referred to the centre, 2375 were less than or equal to 15 years (13%), of which 1254 and 1121 were girls and boys, respectively. In forensic aspect, 940 children had intentional poisoning, 1380 patients accidental events, 3 were criminal and in 52 children, the information were not identified in this respect. The route of poisoning in 1954 patients was oral, 109 through the respiratory tract, 28 via injection, and 232 were per-cutaneous and 52 cases were unknown. Pharmaceuticals were the most common agents (1321 Cases), of which 262 patients were intoxicated by benzodiazepines. The most common chemical agent was organophosphate pesticides (135 cases) followed by kerosene (104 patients). The common natural toxins were scorpion bite (91 cases) and opium (83 cases).

### **Conclusion:**

The most common cause of acute poisoning in children of northeast Iran was pharmaceutical agents, mostly benzodiazepine, followed by chemicals mostly organophosphate pesticides and then scorpion bite.

**Key words:** Children, acute poisoning, epidemiology, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, natural toxins.