

PROFILE OF POISONING CASES ADMITTED TO A TERTIARY CARE HOSPITAL IN SOUTHERN INDIA

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Background: Poisoning is a socio-medical problem and hence analysis helps to design policies towards treatment and prevention.

Objective: To analyze the patients admitted to the poison centre with respect to sociodemographic profile, etiological agents used, clinical aspects and outcome.

Methods: A retrospective study was designed to analyse all the poisoning cases admitted to PCTRC from January 2007 and December 2008. Their details with reference to the objectives were collected in a proforma after an approval from Institutional ethical committee. The data were analysed statistically.

Results: A total of 4357 patients were admitted to PCTRC during the period of 48 months. Thus poisoning cases constituted 0.06% of total admission. Male to female ratio was 1.3:1.2 and did not differ from admissions made to general medical ward. The distribution of cases in relation to age group 13-19, 20-39, 40-59, and 60 and above were 20, 58.5, 18.7 and 2.8% respectively. Analysis of age group and gender revealed that males were more in the age group 40 and above, and females in the age group below 40, and the difference was significant statistically ($P=0.001$). 70% belonged to low income group and the rest to low middle income group. Among the chemical poisoning suicidal contributed to 93%, accidental to 4.5% and occupational to 2.5%. Of all the cases, snake bite and scorpion sting formed 16 and 0.25% respectively. The nature of materials used were in the order of pesticides, prescribed drugs, plant extracts and house hold chemicals including corrosives, and were 46, 36, 10 and 8% respectively. Their hospital stay varied from 2 to 40 days. There were 250 deaths and were significantly more among males ($P=0.01$). The difference was due to the quantity, nature of chemicals, time delay between consumption of poisonous agents and hospitalization and combination of poisonous agents. Psychological analysis revealed one or other co-existing psychological disorders only in 2% of cases only. Precipitating factors were situational reactions rather than planned ones.

Conclusion: As majority of the patients were in the economically productive age group and hence, there is a need for a community based intervention program and a helpline which will address to their psycho-social issues and provide counseling. The prescribed

drugs used by these population were different from that of west. In view of large number of pesticide poisoning students of health sciences have to be trained accordingly.