

## **PATTERN OF POISONING CASES REFERRED TO THE NATIONAL POISON CENTRE: A 5-YEAR REPORT (2006-2010)**

A Nur Afni A, MA Adilah, H Haslina, A Rahmat, LJ Razak National Poison Centre of Malaysia, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia

**Objectives:** This study aims to scrutinize the pattern of poisoning enquiries referred to the National Poison Centre of Malaysia during a five year period between 2006-2010 and to compare the trend of the poisoning profile with the previous 5-year data (2001-2005). **Method:** Data were analysed using SPSS version 15 to generate frequencies and percentages.

**Results:** Between 2006-2010, a total of 14,436 cases were reported to the centre. This number is a significant increase compared to the data of the previous 5 years (2001 -2005) where only 3,057 cases were reported. The current 5-year data found that the major toxic substances implicated are pharmaceuticals (35.1%), followed by pesticide (30.0%), and household products (24.2%). The previous 5-year report showed that pesticides (38.3%) was the main substance with pharmaceuticals (26.1%) next and household products (20.5%). All other poisoning patterns were found to be or about similar as those of the previous 5 years. The current 5-year data also show that 62% of the cases were received after office hours . Almost all of the cases (99.2%) were reported from medical officers. Of all of the cases, 56.1% were intentional while 41.9% were reported as unintentional cases. Majority of the cases were by oral ingestion (94.5%) inhalation exposure (2.0%). Poisonings involving adults was 59.9% while 25.8% were children.

**Conclusion:** The current report shows some changes in the patterns of poisoning enquiries in contrast to the previous 5-year data. The number of enquiries have increased significantly from 3,057 five years ago (2001-2005) to 14,436 cases (2006 -2010). The present data also shows a shift in the trend of the toxic substances implicated, that is, from pesticides to pharmaceuticals. The increasing number of enquiries is an indication that the services of the poison centre is crucial and is relevant to the current health setting. It is therefore pertinent that the National Poison Centre strategizes its sustainability plans as well as take steps to ensure that it continues to provide quality service to support national health.