

## Oral Abstracts

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#### Utilisation of Poison Centre Advice in Hospitals

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**Objectives:** The Poisons Information Centre (PIC) provides toxicological advice to doctors treating patients with poisoning in Australia. This study aims to determine if toxicology consultant advice on the management of severe poisoning is being followed by treating physicians, and whether this impacts on outcomes.

**Methods:** This is a prospective study from January to June 2016. Patients were identified from the PIC toxicologist daily reports. Cases were followed up if they were 1) severe overdoses with directly cardiotoxic medications 2) haemodynamically unstable patients 3) herbicides and insecticides 4) advised to receive antidotes or invasive treatments.

The treating hospital team was called the following day, to determine whether toxicology advice was followed, and the outcome or condition of the patient.

**Results:** 60 patients were followed up. In 20 cases (33%) some or all of the consultant advice was not followed; 40 (67%) cases management followed the advice given. The main reason cited for not following advice was disagreement with the suggested management (18/20; 90%).

Treatment areas where doctors in the hospital diverged from suggested management included dialysis, activated charcoal and use of specific antidotes (Table 1). In one case a CT abdomen was not undertaken when advised.

There were 7 deaths (11.6%). Three were considered inevitable. The severity of the poisoning was not initially recognized in 3 patients and treatments that may have been life-saving were delayed or never given. The cause of death was not clear in 1 patient.

**Conclusion:** Consultant toxicology advice was not followed in a third of cases. This frequently led to increased expense and morbidity, when unnecessary expensive antidotes and invasive treatments were given. In a few cases, treatments were withheld or delayed and this may have contributed to a fatal outcome.

Table 1. Management given by treating doctors that was not in accordance with PIC specialist advice.

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	Treatment advice not followed or delayed by doctor	Treatment initiated by doctor against advice.
Dialysis	4	2
Activated charcoal	2	-
High dose insulin dextrose	3	1
Intralipid	-	1
Methylene Blue	1	-
Digoxin Fab	-	1
Folinic acid	-	1
Acetylcysteine	-	1