

## Poster Abstracts

### PO-52

#### ANGELIC TRUMPET, DEVIL'S BREATH

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**Background:** Beliefs and myths often cloud the rightful mind, and this might be applicable when it comes to the use of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) in Malaysia. TCM is regarded as a form complementary medicine and its widespread misconception of being safe because of their natural origins, has gained trust from the general public, notably in Chinese population.

**Case presentation:** We reported a case where a 33 year-old Chinese man patient presented to the Emergency Department who developed anticholinergic poisoning after ingesting brews of *Datura metel* obtained from a local chinese herbal shop for diarrhea. His prominent clinical features included confusion, agitation, tachycardia, flushing, dilated pupils and dry lips. The patient had a spontaneous recovery within 48 hours with supportive measures in the intensive care unit, and no sequelae noted.

**Discussion:** *Datura metel* (Yangjinhua) is also known as 'Devil's Trumpet', which is under the family of *Solanaceae*. It is a domesticated, night scented plant, which occurs naturally in both the new and ancient world. Recent studies in the 20<sup>th</sup> century showed the species originated in America, rather than traditionally believed as Greek, Arabic or Indian sources.

Its long histories of use as an indigenous herbal plant in treating asthma, bronchitis, pain, epilepsy and skin diseases; has different purposes in the modern medicine. Nevertheless, *datura metel* is cultivated as a source of tropane alkaloid and scopolamine. Therefore, it can be detrimental if overdosing occurs, where it can induce anticholinergic, hallucinogenic, psychotropic poisoning or even death.

In this case, our patient had a lack of understanding of the possible risks of purchasing TCM over the counter, and clear direction of the possible adverse events from *Datura metel* ingestion, as well as drug-to-drug interactions, was not warned. Moreover, the cause of patient's symptom was not addressed appropriately before prescribing such potentially harmful herbal plant. The other contributing factor to the poisoning may be as a result of confusion from different names ascribed to *Datura metel* in chinese medicine. Last but not least, physostigmine was not used to treat the patient's anticholinergic toxidromes, as there are studies demonstrating either the length of hospital stay or duration of intensive care use do not decrease with such measure.

**Lesson Learnt:** The widely and inappropriate usage of herbal medicine is a main concern in most parts of the world. Hence in cases of 'unexplained' anticholinergic poisoning, high index of suspicion of overdosing *Datura metel* should be raised.