

P007 [ID#17]

Refractory Hypoglycemia Caused by Fatal Valproic acid Intoxication: Pitfall of Suicide Attempt with Drug Overdose

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The incidence of suicide attempts with valproic acid (VPA) intoxication has been increasing in recent years. The neurologic and hepatic toxicity of VPA has been widely known; however, severe hypoglycemia induced by VPA has been rarely emphasised. Further, patients with unknown drug poisoning are often encountered in the emergency department. Incomplete medication history provided by families delays clinical adjustment. Here we report a case of a patient who attempted suicide with drug overdose and presented with refractory hypoglycemia and altered mental status, which was confirmed to be associated with fatal VPA intoxication. Therefore, we emphasise that refractory hypoglycemia induced by fatal VPA intoxication should be alerted. Increased insulin secretion and carnitine deficiency may be possible mechanisms. Close monitoring of serum glucose, avoiding fasting and continuous nutrition supplement in fatal VPA intoxication are suggested.