

Trends in paediatric poisoning in Anuradhapura District: a tertiary care center experience.

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Abstract

Evidence on paediatric poisoning which is preventable has been lacking in Anuradhapura District of Sri Lanka. This prospective study identifies the trends in poisoning including the demographic profiles, risk factors, complications, and the outcome of acute poisoning among children residing in Anuradhapura District.

All children presented acutely with either accidental or deliberate poisoning to all paediatric casualties at Anuradhapura teaching hospital were included in the study and, were assessed prospectively using clinical interviews, focused group discussions, clinical observations and bed head ticket based records over a period of eight months from March 2012.

Among 167 children 53% were male and 91% were below six years of age. Accidental poisoning was predominantly observed (97%) and commonest poison was kerosene oil (24.9%). Risk factor analysis revealed inadequate supervision by parents (87.5%) as the commonest

risk factor. Poor storage of household chemicals (52%) and medicines (40%) were commoner among other risk factors.

Children become victims of acute poisoning mostly secondary to inadequate supervision by their parents and unsafe storage of poisons. As poor storage of medicines, household chemicals are increasingly associated with accidental poisoning, community education and safe storage will reduce the incidence of paediatric poisoning.

Keywords: Childhood poisoning, Patterns and risk factors, Prevention

Introduction

Acute poisoning in children is a major preventable cause of morbidity and mortality. It is a world-wide problem although the nature of poison consumed may vary in developed and developing countries due to variable accessibility. According to WHO, mortality due to acute poisoning in children up to 4 years of age varies between 0.3 to 7 per 100,000 populations in different countries of the world¹. (World Health Statistics Annual, 1988).

With changes in the socio-economic environment in many countries, the importance of childhood accidents has been highlighted even at the global level and poisoning is considered to be an important subgroup within the overall group of accidents². (Hatton F, Tired L, Nicand