

# ile of poisoning and its management

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## **Abstract:**

To identify changes in treatment methods and types of drugs taken in overdoses over a 10-year period we conducted a retrospective study in the accident and emergency department of a large teaching hospital. The influence of a protocol to direct medical management was also studied. Results were compared with those of a 1984 survey at the same institution. 409 cases of accidental and deliberate poisoning were reviewed. In deliberate poisoning 52% of drugs taken were prescription drugs, 41.6% over-the-counter medications and the remaining 6.4% illicit drugs. Only 13% of patients had a stomach emptying procedure compared with 75.2% of patients in the previous survey. Charcoal was administered or offered in over 95% of cases. Medical management of overdoses in this centre changed drastically over 10 years. A department protocol had been adhered to in the great majority of cases, and we recommend that all accident and emergency departments as well as medical and paediatric teams establish similar protocols. Over-the-counter drugs are increasingly troublesome, especially paracetamol, which accounts for 28.8% of drugs taken in deliberate overdose.