

Patterns of poisoning among patients aged 0-13 years at a paediatric hospital in Nairobi

VM Mutiso, AS Muoki, MM Kimeu

Objectives: To determine the pattern of poisoning amongst patients admitted at a paediatric hospital in Nairobi and compare it with that of other hospitals around the world

Design: A retrospective hospital based multivariate study.

Setting: Gertrude's Garden Children's Hospital, Nairobi, Kenya.

Subjects: Medical records of all children admitted with a diagnosis of poisoning between January 2003 and December 2007

Results: The age range of the study population was birth to 13 years. The mean age was 3.57 years with a standard deviation of ± 1.57 with a peak incidence in the one to three years old age group (56.7%). Males comprised 61.7% of the cases. The most common cause of poisoning was ingestion of a drug (46.7%). Petroleum products caused 30.0%, detergents 8.3% and organophosphates 6.7%. Ninety six point seven percent of poisonings were unintentional and 93.3% of injuries took place at home. There were no mortalities.

Conclusion: The majority of these incidents were preventable. Measures need to be instituted to reduce the number of incidents of poisoning in children. This can take the form of health and safety education particularly in relation to storage of common household poisons.