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INTRODUCTION

Poison Center by the American NMPDIC is certified as a Regional toxicposurveillance system. The New Mexico’s only computerized throughout the state, and operates coordinates poison prevention hazardous material incidents. It also assists emergency personnel during possible poisonings, responds to all New Mexico residents 24 hours a day with a full-time, dedicated staff. The number of calls received by the Center has grown steadily over the years from 12,000 in 1977 to over 30,000 in 2013. Total calls have been declining while exposure calls have remained steady. From the moment it was incorporated into the University, the New Mexico Poison and Drug Information Center has pursued compliance with all professional standards; especially the certification requirements of the American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC). The quality of the Center, its staff and its services has resulted in its certification as a Regional Poison Center by AAPCC for six consecutive 5-year periods (the latest in 2015). With the formation of the UNM Health Sciences Center (HSC) in 1994, it became possible for the Center to share faculty positions with other HSC units. The NMPDIC Director is shared with the UNM College of Pharmacy and the Medical Director is shared with the UNM School of Medicine’s Department of Emergency Medicine. The NMPDIC consists of two telephone-based services – a poison information service and a drug information service. The goals of the poison information service are to:

- Provide expert, 24-hour assistance to the citizens of New Mexico during possible poisoning emergencies.
- Reduce the costs associated with poisoning by treating less severe exposures at home with Center assistance.
- Train healthcare professionals in the field of clinical toxicology.
- Expand knowledge in the field of clinical toxicology through an active research program.
- Prevent poisonings through toxicosurveillance, education, regulation, and close-patient cooperation with local, state and federal agencies.
- Provide individualized, accurate, relevant, and unbiased information to consumers and healthcare professionals regarding medication-related inquiries.
- Help train pharmacists to be drug information providers.

From July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019, the Center received 21,527 calls for assistance. There were 3,024 drug information inquiries during FY18. Poisoning-related calls totaled 21,254 with 20,091 of these calls involving possible human poisonings and 1,163 involving animal poisonings. The map on the first page shows human poisoning calls by county, and the graphs below show total calls to NMPDIC since its inception, and hospital call trends. The Center performs a risk assessment and possible poisoning exposure. Each call results in the generation of a patient-specific treatment regimen, whether to the public, physicians, or to other healthcare professionals. The Center utilizes an extensive array of books, articles, and computerized information systems to provide the most current information available during poison treatment. With these resources, the Center can quickly identify and assess the acute toxicity of more than 100,000 commercial products. All cases are monitored with follow-up telephone calls until the patient is clearly out of danger. The average poisoning case generates 2.1 follow-up calls. 42% of the patients managed by the Center are less than six years of age. Medications account for 57% of the substances involved with poisoning. 81% of the poisoning exposures were managed safely at home with Poison Center assistance. By treating patients at home instead of in the emergency department, the hospitalization cost to New Mexicans was lowered by $11.8 million statewide. In FY 18, the Center also consulted on 1163 animal exposures and responded to 3024 requests for drug information. The NMPDIC provided 4,878 telephone consultations to healthcare providers. The Center utilizes physician toxicologists on 703 of these cases. At the University of New Mexico Hospital, the NMPDIC clinical service performed bedside consultations on 109 patients.

The Center’s staff is among the finest in the nation. All of the Pharmacist Specialists in Poison Information that have met the time-in-service qualifications for the AAPCC Certification Examination, have passed the exam with excellent scores, and two had the highest scores in the country during their examination years. The NMPDIC uses a computerized data collection system to collect and compile poison exposure information. The data are used by the state and national agencies to enhance product safety, to target poison prevention efforts and to improve poison treatments.

THE DIRECTOR

Susan Smolinske

A poison center is only as good as the people answering the phones, so I want to give thanks for a fantastic year of effort by our talented and knowledgeable Specialists in Poison Information. Our pharmacists and pharmacy technician have extraordinary expertise and this year sustained our perfect 100% history passing national certification exam. Also thanks to our amazing educator, who has exceeded her goals for outreach three years in a row. Preventing poisoning and promoting awareness of our services is a vital component of our mission. I am equally proud of the expertise of our medical staff. I congratulate Dr. Warrick for attaining board certification in Addiction Medicine, to add to his toxicology credentials. He has become a critical piece of the statewide efforts to combat opioid addiction. I thank Dr. Seifert for his provision of statewide education regarding a new antivenom available for the 2019 snakebite season and for promoting education of our pharmacy and medical students and residents. Last, but not least, thanks to our newest employee, Scott Roberts, our Administrative Assistant. Scott increases our depth of expertise in graphics design and all things computer. To maintain all of these activities, the poison center depends upon private philanthropy, in addition to state funding. We have some challenges ahead, in that a significant part of our funding is derived from the Tobacco Settlement fund, which has generated diminishing resources the last two years, and as a result has depleted our reserve funding considerably. To this end, I have created, along with Angela Lovato, the Dennis S. Peña Poison Center Endowment fund. Once fully funded, this endowment will become an enduring tribute to a legendary New Mexican pharmacist who was passionate about the New Mexico Poison & Drug Information Center. We will honor his memory by promoting education regarding poisoning to vulnerable populations in our state.

Click on this link to donate.
https://www.unmfund.org/fund/dennis-s-pena-memorial-poison-center-endowment/
The NMPDIC takes various types of calls from Home to Hospitals throughout New Mexico.

**Fig. 1** Hospital calls to NMPDIC
NMPDIC took 5635 calls from hospitals in FY19.

**Fig. 2** Call History per Fiscal Year
NMPDIC took 23,079 calls during FY19, and 1,485,301 calls in the past 30 years.

**Fig. 3** NMPDIC Program Summary
NMPDIC Program Summary and cost savings for last 5 Fiscal years.

**Fig. 4** Calls by Counties in New Mexico
Calls to NMPDIC throughout New Mexico separated by county.

**Fig. 5** NMPDIC Poisonings by Substance
Top substances called in to NMPDIC and fatality total.
HOT TOPIC

American Association of Poison Control Centers

Did you know your local poison control center has the expertise to help you prevent and treat bites and stings? No matter where you live, the best prevention is to keep the Poison Help hotline number (1-800-222-1222) programmed in your phone.

How to Prevent a Snake Bite

The species of venomous snakes in the U.S. include copperheads, rattlesnakes, cottonmouths, and coral snakes. However, not all of these species occur everywhere in the country. Most calls to poison control centers about snakes and snake bites occur between May and September. Most snakes occur when people accidentally step on a snake or come across a snake, frightening it and causing it to bite defensively. By practicing extra caution in snake-prone environments, many of these bites are preventable:

- Prevent a snake bite by wearing protective clothing and using a stick to scare away snakes hiding in tall grass. Never touch or handle a snake.
- If you are bitten, do not apply a tourniquet or attempt to suck out or cut out the venom.
- Call the Poison Help line (1-800-222-1222) right away and seek additional medical help if advised by a poison expert.

Moreover, not all bites from venomous snakes result in the injection of venom. This is often called a “dry bite.” By calling the Poison Help line (1-800-222-1222) right away and seeking medical help if advised by a poison expert, you will be helping to prevent and treat bites and stings.

How to Prevent Bites from Disease-Carrying Insects

There are many infectious diseases that people can get from biting or stinging insects, especially mosquitoes and ticks. According to the CDC, some of the most notable diseases include Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Lyme Disease, West Nile, and Zika Viruses. Preventing these bites in the first place can protect you and your family from disease.

- Use a dull, firm surface, like the edge of a credit card, to gently push the stinger out of the skin.
- Do not pinch or use tweezers. This can squeeze more venom into the skin.

How to Prevent Bites from Disease-Carrying Insects

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How to Prevent Bites from Disease-Carrying Insects

- Use insect repellent whenever you spend time outdoors, especially during the warmer months. Here are some tips for safely using insect repellents:
- Concentrations of up to 30% DEET have been shown to be safe for use on children older than 2 months, but be sure to follow application instructions carefully.
- Only use bug spray that is meant to be used on skin; never use household insect or pest killer on the skin.
- Be sure to follow application instructions carefully, and wash off the product once returning indoors.
- If anyone ingests, inhales, or sprays insect repellent into the eyes, call Poison Help at 1-800-222-1222 immediately.

If you have general questions about insect repellent or pest killing, call the American Association of Poison Control Centers at 1-800-858-7378 (Mon-Fri, 8am-12pm Pacific Time).

Graphics Illustration by Scott M. Roberts

American Association of Poison Control Centers

Each year, America’s poison control centers answer thousands of calls about exposures to tobacco products like cigarettes, e-cigarettes, and chewing tobacco. Exposures to these other products containing nicotine can cause nausea, vomiting, and dizziness. In serious cases, exposure can lead to life-threatening and severe symptoms like seizures, decreased heart rate, and decreased blood pressure. These symptoms can happen to anyone of any age, but the risk is greatest in children due to their size. While nicotine in any form can cause poisoning, since 2011 poison control centers have been most concerned about exposures to e-cigarette products and liquid nicotine. This is because the concentration of nicotine in liquid products is higher than most other tobacco products.

One could be exposed to the liquid nicotine in an e-cigarette or e-liquid (vape juice, smoke juice) by drinking it, spilling it on the skin, or breathing in too much vapor. To prevent exposure to e-cigarettes and liquid nicotine, AAPCC recommends the following:

- Always store products up, away, and out of sight of kids. Because these products may smell or look like kid-friendly foods, kids may be tempted to touch or taste them.
- Use caution when refilling or handling liquids. Wash your hands with soap and water, and clean up any spills immediately.
- Talk to your teens about the health effects using e-cigarettes or “vape” products. If someone has been exposed to nicotine, especially a child, call the Poison Help hotline at 1-800-222-1222 right away.
HOT TOPIC
DAYCARE & SCHOOLS

surfaces the skin
Absorbing chemical residues through
Breathing in toxic vapors or fumes
objects in their mouth
Licking surfaces or placing hands or
scenarios include:
contact with hazardous chemicals. These
harm to adults can still be harmful to
children are especially sensitive to
surfaces that come into contact with food.
Disinfectants should never be used on
settings to disinfect household surfaces.
Common cleaners and disinfectants
Disinfecting wipes
Alcohol-based hand sanitizers
Bug sprays and insect repellents
It is also important to remember that some
cleaning products, like bleach and antimicrobial
can create highly toxic fumes when
combined. NEVER mix cleaning chemicals!
Read and follow label instructions. Make a
habit of reviewing the label on any
chemical or product before each use.
Follow use directions, and the directions
provided for safe storage and disposal. For
antimicrobials to be effective, the surface
must be free of any contamination.

The American Association of Poison
Control Centers (AAPCC) and the National
Pesticide Information Center (NPIC) offer
a few simple steps to help prevent poisoning
at daycare and school
Store cleaning products and chemicals
up, away, and out of reach of children,
and in their original containers. Keep the
following substances in cabinets secured
with child-resistant locks:
Common cleaners and disinfectants
Disinfecting wipes
Alcohol-based hand sanitizers
Bug sprays and insect repellents

Parents play a critical role in helping their
tweens learn about the responsible use of
OTC (over-the-counter) medicines. With
approximately 10,000 kids under age 18
visiting emergency departments every
year due to errors from self-administering
OTC medications2, it is important for
parents and guardians to discuss the safe
use and storage of OTC medicines with
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### OPIOID (NARCOTIC) PAIN MEDICATIONS

Prescription opioids (otherwise known as narcotics) are a subcategory of analgesics, which are pharmaceuticals that relieve pain. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), “Opioids reduce the intensity of pain signals reaching the brain and affect those brain areas controlling emotion, which diminishes the effects of a painful stimulus.” Opioids can be dangerous if misused or abused. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), opioids caused more than 42,000 deaths in 2016, the highest number of opioid-related deaths to date. Additionally, the CDC states nearly two million Americans were dependent on or abused prescription opioids in 2014. Each day, almost 1,000 people are treated in emergency departments for using these drugs in a manner other than as directed. In recent years there has been a dramatic increase in the acceptance and use of prescription opioids for the treatment of chronic, non-cancer pain, such as back pain or osteoarthritis. The United States is in the midst of a prescription painkiller overdose epidemic, due at least in part to the over-prescribing of opiate medications by health care practitioners.

NPDS statistical analyses indicate that all analgesic exposures including opioids and sedatives are increasing year over year. This trend is shown in Table 17b and Figure 5 in the 2017 NPDS annual report. NPDS data mirror CDC data that demonstrates similar findings.

As of September 30, 2019, poison control centers have managed 43,569 opioid substances exposure cases. For more information on how poison control center data is collected, please click here.
Kyndall Monroe
PharmD
Certified Specialist in Poison Information
3 years

What is the best thing working at NMPDIC?
We make a difference in almost every single case we are involved in. We keep kids at home when they don’t need to go to the ER and we help to reassure parents that their children will be fine when it is appropriate. Alternatively, we are able to quickly assess and refer into an emergency room when something is a problem. Many healthcare providers do not have the understanding of pharmacokinetics like we do, especially in overdose, and are not aware of many drugs that can have severe delayed effects. We give specific recommendations to healthcare providers which saves tens of millions of dollars per year in unnecessary healthcare costs. We also tend to shorten hospital stays and have better outcomes when we are involved.

What was your greatest moment this year?
We had a patient who was very ill in the hospital after intentionally overdosing on his medications. He said he took a fairly benign medication in overdose but he was having very severe effects. We were giving a very expensive antidote for antifreeze poisoning and sending special blood samples to a lab to try to rule out the toxic alcohols. These samples usually takes many hours or even days for these labs to result. The lab made a mistake and destroyed all of the samples that we had been waiting on for several days. The hospital had also run out of the antidote. I did a bit of digging into the patient’s medical conditions and asked the nurse if the patient overdosed on a look-alike/sound-alike medication that was more in line with the patient’s medical conditions. I was correct: it was a very common diabetic medication. With this information, we were able to save thousands in healthcare dollars and better treat the patient. The patient recovered quickly.

Random bit of trivia about yourself?
Every Saturday morning in high school, I was out participating in regional Quiz Bowl (trivia) tournaments. Since high school, I have participated in several national trivia tournaments and play local pub trivia weekly. We have a national toxicology meeting coming up and they have a Quiz Bowl competition. My coworker and I will be representing the West Coast Quiz Bowl team.

LaDonna Bonnin
BS Pharm
Certified Specialist in Poison Information
Team Lead
17 years

What is the best thing working at NMPDIC?
The NMPDIC presents a unique practice site for pharmacists. The collaboration with other healthcare professionals across the state gives me great satisfaction while presenting the opportunity for continued learning on a daily basis. Our calls from the general public, though, tend to be the most rewarding in that there is no better feeling that setting a caller at ease in knowing their loved one is going to be fine after a poisoning emergency or will receive the best care if medical evaluation is necessary.

What was your greatest moment this year?
I’m excited about taking on the Team Lead position this year. This position has allowed me to be a link between the SPIs and administration which has opened up communication for a more productive work place. It’s also given me the opportunity to work on projects that are important to me and to give other SPIs time off the phones to work on projects as well as giving support to the call center when necessary.

Random bit of trivia about yourself?
I’ll be running my first half marathon in February and am super nervous about it.

Warner Wolf
PharmD
Specialist in Poison Information
1.5 years

What is the best thing working at NMPDIC?
Having an opportunity to directly impact the outcome of potentially fatal exposures.

What do you think went well this year?
The release of Anavip has been exciting in regards to management of snake bites as well as flowing for effects outpatient.

What was your greatest moment this year?
My trip to the Phillipines.

Random bit of trivia about yourself?
Favorite food is fried chicken.
Jacqueline M. Kakos
The NMPDIC health education consultant, Jacqueline Kakos, traveled to a conference in Arizona to assess the needs of Navajo Nation professionals regarding poison prevention efforts. Eighty-two participants filled out a survey. The results will be tabulated, fully analyzed and presented in an official report during the fall of 2019.

In response to the decades-long opioid epidemic in America, Jacqueline worked in collaboration with the UNM College of Pharmacy and the New Mexico Department of Health on a research project that studied the attitudes, normative beliefs, self-efficacy with respect to self-guided dispensing of naloxone, and dispensing of other disease prevention supplies among pharmacists and pharmacy technicians. The ultimate goal of the project, Consider New Mexico, was to increase naloxone dispensing among these healthcare professionals as result of the study intervention. During the next fiscal year, Jacqueline will continue to function as an outreach specialist in the second phase of this research project.

Steven A. Seifert
Professional education and public health efforts continued at a brisk pace. In FY 19 Dr. Steven Seifert, the NMPDIC Medical Director, who had served on the Governor’s Advisory Panel on prescription opioid deaths as the statutory representative of the University of New Mexico since 2012, stepped down, with Dr Brandon Warrick assuming that appointment. Within the University of New Mexico campus, the NMPDIC served as a 4-week teaching site for 65 pharmacy students, 31 medical residents (16 EM, 13 IM, 2 Pediatrics). 2 medical fellows, 9 medical students and 1 Physician Assistant student.

Additional educational programs included resident and faculty presentations to the Departments of Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Pathology, Psychiatry, and Emergency Medicine. In addition, Dr. Seifert continued a quarterly state-wide webinar program and other educational offerings throughout the University and state. Dr. Seifert continued as Editor in Chief of Clinical Toxicology (Taylor & Francis), the official journal of the American Academy of Clinical Toxicology, the European Association of Poison Centers (EAPCCT) and Clinical Toxicologists, the American Association of Poison Control Centers, and the Asia Pacific Association of Medical Toxicology.

Dr. Seifert has contributed to the advancement of toxicological knowledge and its dissemination through original research and presentations at national and international meetings, publication of scholarly papers and medical textbook chapters, and again served on the Scientific and Meeting Committees, and was an abstract reviewer, for the EAPCCT annual meeting.

Dr. Seifert continued to serve as Treasurer of the North American Society of Toxicology.

Dr. Seifert received the Volunteer Faculty Award from the UNM College of Pharmacy and the Presidential Merit Award by the American Academy of Clinical Toxicology at the annual North American Congress of Clinical Toxicology meeting.

Dr. Seifert also continued to perform with his jazz combo in the Arts-in-Medicine concert series at the UNM University Hospital.

Brandon J. Warrick
Doctor Brandon J. Warrick is the NMPDIC Associate Medical Director and Board Certified in Medical Toxicology, Emergency Medicine, and Addiction Medicine. He regularly meets with multiple governmental and regulatory agencies aimed at the current overdose epidemic. In FY 18, Dr. Warrick authored a position defining initiation of opioid agonist treatment in the emergency medicine setting. At the national level, Dr. Warrick was recognized as a “Top contributor” by the American College of Medical Toxicology the second year in a row. Dr. Warrick was also invited by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to assist in defining protocols in handling of fentanyl specimens. Dr. Warrick is heavily involved in teaching and pioneering more effective teaching methods for the toxicology rotation. In addition to the poison teaching service, Dr. Warrick has been regularly teaching to College of Pharmacy and School of Medicine students. Dr. Warrick has provided outreach education for multiple groups around the state.

NMPDIC
The NMPDIC continues to face significant financial challenges, with some state resources reduced during FY18 and FY19 and at risk in future years. Although the program has been able to provide uninterrupted telephone service to New Mexico, the reductions made in marketing, outreach, and education over the past three years have contributed to a decline in program utilization by home callers while increasing utilization among healthcare professionals. Over the next year, the NMPDIC plans to continue innovative, community-driven public education programs, use technology more effectively to deliver professional education programs, and develop a broader array of professional education offerings.
NMPDIC

FY19

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