

Suicidal Poison Exposures Reported to Virginia's Poison Centers **2000-2003**

Year 2000

In the year 2000, there were 5187 suicidal poison exposures reported to Virginia Poison Centers (an average of 14.2 calls per day with more calls coming in during evening hours). Ninety percent were exposed in their own residences. The vast majority (98.9%) resulted from ingestion of toxic substances. Ninety two percent, or 4751, of the cases were ultimately managed in a health care facility; and of these referrals, about 29% were admitted to critical care units and 25% were admitted to psychiatric facilities. While sadly, the medical outcome for 19 people, including two teenagers, was death and another 211 (4%) of the callers had major effects as a result of the exposure, the majority of those exposed had either moderate (16%) or minor to no effects of their exposures (63%).

Females made up a higher percentage of cases across all age groups. Females accounted for 66% of all cases, 62% of adult cases, and 75% of youth cases. Thirty percent (1557) of the cases involved children and youth under 20 (1492 were teens 13-19 and 57 were children 6-12, 2 were under 6 years of age, 6 were of unknown age). Among 6-19 year olds, the most common types of exposures were to analgesics (40%), antidepressants (15%), sedatives/ hypnotics/anti-psychotics (9%), cough and cold preparations (6 %) and antihistamines (6%). Another 69% (3574) of the cases were adults 20 years or older. Sixty three percent of the adults were below the age of 40 . For those 20 years or older, the most common exposures were to analgesics (22%), sedatives/antipsychotics/hypnotics (21%), antidepressants (18%), and alcohols (8%)

Year 2001

In the year 2001, there were 5733 suicidal poison exposures reported to Virginia Poison Centers (an average of 15.7 calls per day, with most calls coming in the evening hour). Ninety-three percent were exposed in their own residences. The vast majority (98.7%) resulted from ingestion of toxic substances. About 93 percent of the cases were ultimately managed in a health care facility; and of these referrals, about 29% were admitted to critical care units and 28% were admitted to psychiatric facilities. While the medical outcome for 16 people, including four teenagers, was death, and another 234 (4%) of the callers had major effects as a result of the exposure, the majority of those exposed had either moderate (19%) or minor to no effects of their exposures (63%).

Females made up a higher percentage of cases across all age groups. Females accounted for 67% of all cases; 64% of adult cases, and 74% of youth cases. Twenty-eight percent (1593) of the cases involved children and youth under 20 (1515 were teens 13-19, 69 were children 6-12 years of age, 6 were younger, 2 were of unknown age). Among 6-19 year olds, the most common types of exposures were to analgesics (37%), antidepressants (15%), sedatives/hypnotics/antipsychotics (9%), cough and cold preparations (7%) and antihistamines (5%). Another 72% (4100) of the cases were adults 20 years or older.

Sixty two percent of the adults were below the age of 40 . For those 20 years or older, the most common exposures were to analgesics (22%), sedatives/antipsychotics/hypnotics (21%), antidepressants (17%), alcohols (10%), and anticonvulsants(4%).

Year 2002

In the year 2002, there were 5769 suicidal poison exposures reported to Virginia Poison Centers (an average of 15.8 calls per day, with most calls coming in the evening hours). Ninety-two percent were exposed in their own residences. The vast majority (98.1%) resulted from ingestion of toxic substances. About 92 percent of the cases were ultimately managed in a health care facility; and of these referrals, about 30% were admitted to critical care units and 27% were admitted to psychiatric facilities. While the medical outcome for 18 people, all adults, was death and another 256 (4%) of the callers had major effects as a result of the exposure, the majority of those exposed had either moderate (20%) or minor to no effects of their exposures (60%).

Females made up a higher percentage of cases across all age groups. Females accounted for 67% of all cases; 64% of adult cases and 75% of youth cases. Twenty-seven percent (1530) of the cases involved children and youth under 20 (1471 were teens 13-19, 55 were children 6-12 years of age, 2 were younger, 2 were of unknown age). Among 6-19 year olds, the most common types of exposures were to analgesics (40%), cough and cold preparations (21%), antidepressants (15%), sedatives/antipsychotics/hypnotics (9%), and antihistamines (6%). Another 73% (4209) of the cases were adults 20 years or older. Sixty two percent of the adults were below the age of 40. For those 20 years or older, the most common exposures were to sedatives/antipsychotics/hypnotics (23%), analgesics (20%), antidepressants (17%), alcohols (9%), and antihistamines (5%).

Year 2003

In the year 2003, there were 5705 suicidal poison exposures reported to the Virginia Poison Centers (an average of 15.6 calls per day, with most calls coming in the evening hour). Ninety-three percent were exposed in their own residences. The vast majority (98.7%) resulted from ingestion of toxic substances. About 92 percent of the cases were ultimately managed in a health care facility; and of these referrals, about 30% were admitted to critical care units and 27% were admitted to psychiatric facilities. While the medical outcome for 25 people , including two teenagers, was death (and another 254 (4%) of the callers had major effects as a result of the exposure, the majority of those exposed had either moderate (20%) or minor to no effects of their exposures (59%).

Females made up a higher percentage of cases across all age groups. Females accounted for 66% of all cases; 63% of adult cases and 76% of youth cases. Twenty-five percent (1448) of the cases involved children and youth under 20 (1389 were teens 13-19, 52 were children 6-12 years of age, 6 were younger, and 1 was unknown age). Among 6-19 year olds, the most common types of exposures were to analgesics (37%), antidepressants (15%), sedatives/antipsychotics/hypnotics (10%), cough and cold preparations (6 %) and antihistamines (5%). Another 75% (4259) of the cases were adults 20 years or older.

Sixty percent of the adults were below the age of 40 . For those 20 years or older, the most common exposures were to analgesics (22%), sedatives/antipsychotics/hypnotics (22%), antidepressants (16%), alcohols (9%), and antihistamines (4%).

Source: AAPCC Toxic Exposure Surveillance System (TESS) (reports run 1/2004)

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