

## LETTER TO EDITOR

## Empowerment of Medical Toxicology in South Korea

JINWOO JEONG\*

Department of Emergency Medicine, College of Medicine, Dong-A University, Busan, South Korea

In a recent issue of the Asia Pacific Journal of Medical Toxicology (APJMT), the importance of empowering medical toxicology in the Asia Pacific Region has been discussed. In the editorial by Dr. Afshari, it has been stated that national societies of medical toxicology are important infrastructure for the development of medical toxicology, and the Asia Pacific Association of Medical Toxicology (APAMT) should support their establishment with a study on current capacities and gaps in each country (1). It would be meaningful to share current status of medical toxicology in South Korea for researchers in the Asia Pacific region to estimate current gaps between countries.

The Korean Society of Clinical Toxicology has been founded in 2002 and its scientific congress has been held regularly each year. The society is a multidisciplinary group and its members include internists, emergency physicians and psychologists. The official journal of the society is titled "Journal of the Korean Society of Clinical Toxicology (JKSCT)" and has been published twice a year since 2003. As the primary language of the journal is Korean, there are obvious limitations for international collaboration and exchange of knowledge. Introduction of the Asia Pacific Journal of Medical Toxicology has opened a new door to solve these problems and to provide young investigators around the region equal chances to publish their works for international readers.

Poison control center has not been established in South Korea, so far. Statistics of medical toxicology are frequently reported by the effort of independent researchers around the country, and the source data are sought from medical records, insurance data and national database of emergency departments. South Korean government has been collaborating with the Korean Society of Clinical

Toxicology to build a toxicology database and to provide a professional-level information for health care personnel via the internet (2). Using the experience of other APAMT countries which had succeeded in establishment of poison control centers (3), would be a great help in developing poison control system in South Korea, and other countries without poison control centers.

Focusing on academic education and training, and also development of practical systems and protocols to improve medical service for poisoned patients are other important subjects in the field of medical toxicology (4). In other areas of medicine, introductory and advanced training courses have already been introduced and implemented internationally, such as Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support, Advanced Trauma Life Support, Winfocus, etc. Such training programs and protocols should also be developed for toxicologic emergencies and run by international collaborations. APAMT would be the most appropriate organization for coordinating these programs across the region.

## REFERENCES

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\* Correspondence to: Jinwoo Jeong, MD. Department of Emergency Medicine, College of Medicine, Dong-A University, 602-715 Daeshin Gongwon-Ro 26, Seo-Gu, Busan, South Korea.

Tel: +82 51 240 2778, E-mail: [advanced@lifesupport.pe.kr](mailto:advanced@lifesupport.pe.kr); [jinwoo@dau.ac.kr](mailto:jinwoo@dau.ac.kr)

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