
LETTER TO EDITOR

Comment on "Empowerment of Medical Toxicology in Asia Pacific Region" - Indian Perspective

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In the editorial by Dr. Reza Afshari "Empowerment of Medical Toxicology in Asia Pacific Region" published in the Asia Pacific Journal of Medical Toxicology (APJMT) (1), the role of Asia Pacific Association of Medical Toxicology (APAMT) in promoting medical toxicology has been discussed and some suggestions have been made regarding how to promote this field of medical sciences in the region. The stated goal of APAMT is to promote chemical safety, poison control and treatment in the region and to some extent the organization has been successful in achieving these objectives. In the editorial, a few suggestions have been put forward to further achieve these objectives.

As far as India is concerned, poison control and treatment centers do not practically exist and most of the acutely poisoned patients are being managed either in general medical departments or intensive care units. The clinical toxicologists are practically non-existent and toxicology is still a part of forensic medicine in undergraduate curriculum and emergency medicine is not developed. There is no society of medical toxicology and the Indian society of toxicology is mostly membered by forensic specialists. A few poison information centers exist in major cities. Most of the research has been done in few centers by interested clinicians as supportive structure is lacking. Hence, a national society of medical toxicology which promotes the

objectives of APAMT is needed. We also need to develop poison control and treatment centers and not only information centers as poisonings are more often due to chemicals and require specialized care.

In most parts of South East Asia, majority of population lives in rural areas and is involved with agriculture. We also need to extend facilities to rural and semi-urban areas. These centers can play an important role in further promoting of public health, poison control and disaster control and also can assist in informing public about dangers of poisons and collection of harmonized data. To achieve these objectives, we need funding which has to be absorbed from government and non-governmental organizations. There is also a need to start educational activities such as post-doctoral fellowships in management of acute poisonings (2,3). This will go in a long way to promote and empower the medical toxicology in the region as India can help several developing countries in fulfilling the objectives of APAMT.

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