Poisoning and envenomation registry: analysis of 200 case reports

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND

Poisoning and envenomation are common health hazards for the Armed Forces personnel. This study was undertaken to analyse the problem in a systematic way so that meaningful data can be generated for policy formulation regarding treatment of such cases.

METHODS

Data were collected from various service hospitals on a 16-point format of all patients treated for any kind of poisoning or envenomation. The data so collected were fed into an electronic database established at the Poisoning and Envenomation Registry for the Armed Forces and analysed for various parameters.

RESULTS

During the observation period of 18 months, the poisoning registry received 202 reports from all over the country, of which 182 were of poisoning and the rest were of envenomation due to snake bites. The maximum numbers reported to the registry were the cases pertaining to soldiers who were poisoned during train travel and were robbed of their belongings. The number of such case reports equals that of incidents due to pesticides for deliberate self-harm. As far as envenomation data are concerned, it is felt that we have received far less number of reports than what actually occurred. Among the ones that we received, all except one were venomous bites which were given polyvalent ASV, and they survived the envenomation.

CONCLUSION

Poisoning and envenomation are important health problems in the Armed Forces. The soldiers travelling by train are the most important group where interventions can be planned for prevention of poisoning and subsequent financial loss during travel. In most of the poisoning cases, there were few diagnostic measures used, which emphasises the need of an analytical and therapeutic poison centre for the Armed Forces. Activated charcoal could have been incorporated in the treatment of many poisoned patients.

MJAFI 2011;67:131–137

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