

Preface

Medical Toxicology



Christopher P. Holstege, MD



Daniel E. Rusyniak, MD

Guest Editors

There are innumerable potential toxins that can inflict harm, including pharmaceuticals, herbals, household products, environmental toxins, occupational chemicals, and drugs of abuse. In 2003, a total of 2,395,582 human exposures cases were reported to the American Association of Poison Control Center's Toxic Exposure Surveillance System. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that poisoning (both intentional and unintentional) was one of the top 10 causes of injury-related death in the United States in all adult age groups. From the beginnings of written history, poisons and their effects have been well described. Paracelsus (1493–1541) correctly noted that “All substances are poisons; there is none which is not a poison. The right dose differentiates a poison. . . .” As life in the modern era has become more complex, so has the study of poisons and their treatments.

This issue of the *Medical Clinics of North America* is dedicated to the topic of medical toxicology. Medical toxicology is a subspecialty recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties; many physicians have trained in this area, focusing their practice on the prevention, diagnosis, and management of poisoning. Over the past decade, the field of medical toxicology has grown in conjunction with the emergence of new pharmaceuticals, abused drugs, and chemicals within the workplace. As the Guest Editors, we considered numerous topics for inclusion in this issue. We decided on those topics we thought represented some of the more common

or controversial areas in our field. It is our hope that this issue will provide insight to clinicians caring for potentially poisoned patients.

Christopher P. Holstege, MD

Departments of Emergency Medicine and Pediatrics

University of Virginia

PO Box 800774

Charlottesville, VA 22908-0774, USA

E-mail address: ch2xf@virginia.edu

Daniel E. Rusyniak, MD

Department of Emergency Medicine

Indiana University School of Medicine

1050 Wishard Boulevard, Room 2200

Indianapolis, IN 46202, USA

E-mail address: drusynia@iupui.edu