

Preface



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Guest Editors

Innumerable potential toxins can inflict harm on humans, and they include pharmaceuticals, herbals, household products, environmental agents, occupational chemicals, drugs of abuse, and chemical terrorism threats. Each year, millions of human exposure cases are reported to the American Association of Poison Control Centers Toxic Exposure Surveillance System. The Center for Disease Control 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 beginning 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 *Emergency Medicine Clinics of North American* is dedicated to the topic of Medical Toxicology. Medical Toxicology is a subspecialty recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties. Physicians who have trained in this area focus 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, chemicals within the work place, and agents of terrorism. As the guest editors, we considered numerous topics for inclusion in this issue. We decided upon the topics we thought represented some of the more common, controversial, or emerging areas in our field. It is our hope

that this issue will provide insight to emergency medicine personnel caring for potentially poisoned patients.

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