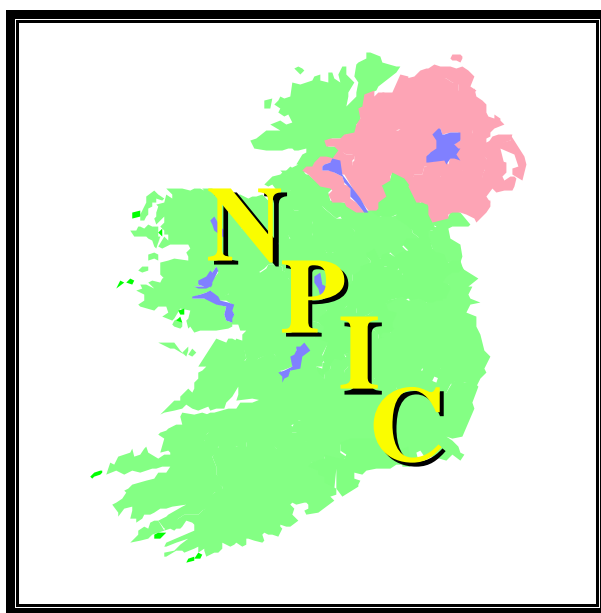


# ANNUAL REPORT 2000



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### ***Introduction:***

The Poisons Information Centre provides a national service to doctors and other healthcare professions in Ireland. The Centre provides information on the toxicity, features and management of poisoning from drugs, household products, industrial chemicals, pesticides, plants and fungi. A limited service is provided to the general public e.g. advice on the need for immediate medical attention, skin and eye decontamination.

The Centre provides a 24-hour service. Between 8.00am and 10.00pm telephone enquiries are answered by our own Poisons Information Officers. Night-time calls were answered by the nursing staff on St. Michael's Ward, Beaumont Hospital, until 30<sup>th</sup> April 2000. Since 1<sup>st</sup> May 2000 our night-time calls have been automatically diverted to the Welsh National Poisons Unit in Cardiff. There are no additional costs to callers as the extra call charges are borne by Beaumont Hospital.

### ***Records:***

Written records are kept of all enquiries to the Centre. A standard call report form is used to note details of telephone enquiries (Appendix 1). In the future we may record our telephone enquiries. Details of all enquiries are registered on a computer database (UKPID) and used to generate reports. Selected enquiries are followed up (usually by telephone) to determine what features the patient developed and the outcome of the case.

### ***Staff:***

Director:	Dr. Joseph A Tracey MB.,FFARCSI.,DABA
1 Manager:	Ms. Patricia Casey BSc
3.5 Poisons Information Officers:	Mr. John Herbert BSc.,Dip Med Tox
	Ms. Elaine Donohoe MSc
	Ms. Nicola Cassidy BSc.,MMedSc
	Mr. Fergal O'Connor BSc
1 Clerical Officer:	Ms. Annette Cooke

The Poisons Information Officers and Manager are all science graduates; some have masters degrees or a post-graduate diploma in medical toxicology. The director is a consultant anaesthetist in Beaumont Hospital. All staff participate in continuing professional development by attending in-house programmes, meetings of Specialists in Poisons Information in the UK and Ireland, courses and conferences organised by the European Association of Poisons Centres and Clinical Toxicology (EAPCCT).

### **Information Sources:**

The Centre uses a variety of information sources including a paper database, computer databases, textbooks, articles from the medical and scientific literature and material safety data sheets provided by industry.

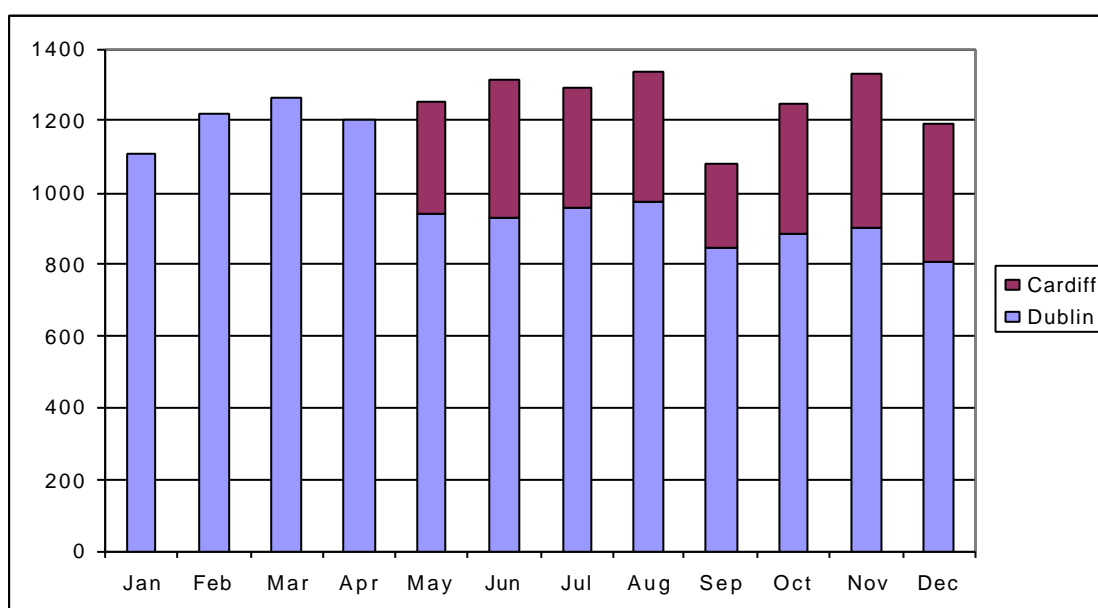
*The computer databases include:*

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| • <b>TOXBASE</b>                   | First tier database of the UK National Poisons Information Service (NPIS) |
| • <b>POISINDEX</b>                 | American Poisons Information database                                     |
| • <b>TOMES PLUS</b>                | Chemicals database  |
| • <b>TICTAC</b>                    | Tablet identification   |
| • <b>UKPID</b>                     | UK NPIS second tier database  |
| • <b>INTOX</b>                     | WHO Poisons Information database  |
| • <b>INCHEM</b>                    | WHO Hazardous Chemicals database  |
| • <b>iSIs</b>                      | Household & Industrial Products (UK)                                      |
| • <b>NPIS Datasheet Compendium</b> | Pesticides & Veterinary Products (UK)                                     |
| • <b>Database GB &amp; Ireland</b> | Poisons Plants of Great Britain and Ireland                               |

### **Enquiries:**

The Centre received a total of 14,389 enquiries in 2000, a similar number to 1999 (14,654 enquiries). August and November were the busiest months (Figure 1). 2,808 of these calls were answered by the Cardiff Centre and are not included in the following analysis.

**Figure 1. Month of enquiry**



12,031 enquiries were answered by our own Poisons Information Officers. Approximately, 34% of these enquiries were from Dublin (city and county), 10% were from Cork, 5% from Galway and 4% from Limerick (Table 1).

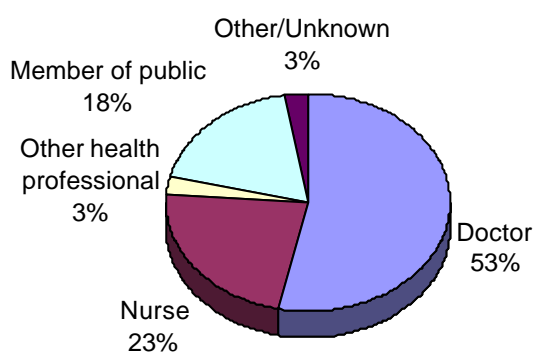
**Table 1      Origin of enquiries**

<b>County / Country</b>	<b>Number of enquiries</b>
Dublin	4061
Cork	1190
Galway	654
Limerick	511
Tipperary	394
Louth	379
Waterford	332
Donegal	302
Kerry	280
Wexford	264
Kildare	243
Mayo	222
Sligo	219
Kilkenny	215
Westmeath	213
Laois	195
Meath	187
Cavan	120
Offaly	111
Monaghan	110
Clare	106
Wicklow	79
Carlow	63
Roscommon	55
Longford	17
Leitrim	9
Unknown	1491
Northern Ireland	6
UK	1
EU	1
USA	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>12031</b>

**Origin of Calls:**

Most enquiries were from doctors and nurses (Figure 2). 2,176 calls (18%) were from members of the public.

**Figure 2. Enquirers**



11,327 (94%) enquiries concerned human cases of poisoning, 107 animals, and 597 were non-emergency requests for information.

**Human Cases of Poisoning:**

4,347 (38.4%) enquiries involved children under 10 years and most of these were under 5 (Table 2). 4,191 (37.0%) enquiries were about adults ( $\geq 20$  years).

Males outnumbered females in the children between 1 and 9 years old. In the older cases there was a predominance of females, particularly in the 15-19 year group.

**Table 2 Age and sex of human cases**

Age (years)	Female	Male	Unknown	Total	F:M Ratio
<1	100	88	24	212	1.14
1-4	1678	1940	188	3806	0.86
5-9	112	197	20	329	0.57
10-14	165	119	5	289	1.39
15-19	605	289	5	899	2.09
20-49	1925	1531	12	3468	1.26
50-69	305	261	2	568	1.17
70+	89	64	2	155	1.39
Unknown	738	647	216	1601	1.14
<b>Total</b>	<b>5717</b>	<b>5136</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>11327</b>	<b>1.11</b>

**Agents:**

The 11,325 enquiries about human cases involved 16,078 substances. As in previous years most cases involved drugs, industrial chemicals or household products (Table 3). Drugs were most frequently ingested by all age groups. However, the majority of cases involving household products, cosmetic and personal hygiene products and plants were children under 10 years.

**Table 3 Agents in human cases**

Age (years)	<1	1-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-49	50-69	70+	UK	Total
Drugs	94	2258	195	291	1309	5433	843	203	1184	11810
Industrial Chemicals	14	133	32	69	129	797	126	15	406	1721
Household products	81	966	55	29	33	111	38	15	236	1564
Pesticides	3	152	21	2	11	96	36	6	114	441
Cosmetics	16	245	9	3	8	44	9	9	55	398
Plants	6	31	4	1	2	4	1	0	13	62
Herbal Remedies	0	29	1	1	3	16	2	1	5	58
Animal	0	2	11	2	0	2	0	0	7	24
Unknown	8	102	1	8	22	72	13	1	120	347
Other	8	41	11	5	2	21	1	2	33	124
<b>Total</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>3816</b>	<b>328</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>1495</b>	<b>6503</b>	<b>1055</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>16078</b>

**Children (< 10 years):**

4,347 enquiries, involving 4,358 products, were about children under 10 years. Drugs, household products and cosmetics and personal hygiene products were most frequently involved. The most common drugs were analgesics, vitamins, psycholeptics and cough and cold preparations.

**Table 4 Most common drugs in paediatric cases.**

Agents	<1	1-4	5-9	Total
Analgesics	9	384	40	433
Vitamins	0	180	21	201
Psycholeptics	8	152	14	174
Cough and Cold Preparations	6	145	7	158
Sex Hormones and modulators	3	116	7	126
Antibiotics	3	104	5	112
Anti-inflammatory and Antirheumatics	4	100	4	108
Nasal preparations	5	86	9	100
Psychoanaleptics	5	88	4	97
Anti-asthmatic	2	75	5	82
Antacids & drugs for treatment of peptic ulcer	1	70	0	71
Antianaemic preparations	0	57	8	65
Antipruritics	1	60	3	64
Stomatological preparations	4	51	5	60

*Adolescents (10 – 19 years)*

1,188 enquiries, involving 1,893 products, concerned adolescents. Drugs, industrial chemicals and household products were most frequently involved. The most common drugs were analgesics, psycholeptics, psychoanaleptics and anti-inflammatory and antirheumatic drugs.

**Table 5 Most common drugs in adolescents**

<b>Agent</b>	<b>10-14</b>	<b>15-19</b>	<b>Total</b>
Analgesics	100	393	493
Psycholeptics	35	203	238
Psychoanaleptics	25	190	215
Anti-inflammatory and antirheumatics	17	100	117
Stomatological preparations	21	77	98
Antibiotics	8	50	58
Gynaecologicals	6	29	35
Antiepileptics	9	22	31
Antianaemic preparations	2	26	28
Antihistamines	4	23	27
Antispasmodics and anticholinergics	6	17	23
Vitamins	11	11	22
Diuretics	1	14	15
Anti-asthmatics	2	9	11
Antidiarrhoeals	2	9	11

*Adults (<sup>3</sup> 20 years)*

4,191 enquiries, involving 7,807 products, concerned adults. Drugs, industrial chemicals and household products were most frequently involved. The most common drugs were psycholeptics, analgesics, psychoanaleptics and anti-inflammatory and antirheumatic drugs.

**Table 6 Most common drugs in adults**

<b>Agent</b>	<b>20-49</b>	<b>50-69</b>	<b>70+</b>	<b>Total</b>
Psycholeptics	1984	357	68	2409
Analgesics	1031	95	18	1144
Psychoanaleptics	920	137	23	1080
Anti-inflammatory and antirheumatics	223	20	1	244
Antiepileptics	199	33	6	238
Stomatological preparations	205	20	8	233
Antibiotics	119	4	5	128
Antacids	59	15	3	77
Diuretics	39	12	14	65
Beta-blockers	41	19	3	63
Anti-parkinson drugs	54	4	1	59
Antihistamines	36	6	0	42
Thyroid therapy	29	4	2	35
Calcium channel blockers	23	5	5	33
Anti-asthmatics	26	3	3	32

### *Outcome*

122 cases were followed up and 97 (79.5%) of these recovered completely, 16 cases suffered sequelae and 9 patients died.

### ***Other Activities***

#### Quality management

The Centre introduced a system for peer review in January 2000. The written records of all calls are reviewed by another Poisons Information Officer to ensure that the form is completed properly and to check the advice given. During the day when several Poisons Information Officers are on duty forms are reviewed within one hour. Calls taken in the evening (6.00pm–10.00pm) are reviewed the following morning. Protocols were written for all our activities and will be reviewed/updated regularly.

#### Antidotes List

The antidotes list was reviewed and the updated version circulated to hospital pharmacies.

#### Training

- John Herbert obtained the Postgraduate Diploma in Medical Toxicology from the University of Wales in June 2000.
- Nicola Cassidy commenced the Beaumont Hospital staff development programme. As part of this programme she undertook a project to develop a leaflet on the prevention of accidental poisoning.
- Elaine Donohoe and John Herbert took the Beaumont Hospital customer care course. Remaining staff will take this course in 2001.
- Elaine Donohoe, Nicola Cassidy and Dr. Joseph Tracey attended the EAPCCT Congress in Amsterdam in May 2000. Elaine attended a one-day symposium prior to the Congress, Continuing Education in Clinical Toxicology.

#### Lectures/presentations

- Patricia Casey lectured on the management of poisoning to emergency medical technicians, A&E nurses, CCU nurses and anaesthetists on several occasions in 2000
- Elaine Donohoe presented a poster on the impact of restrictions on the sale of paracetamol and Nicola Cassidy presented a poster on the effect of the nation-wide nurse's strike on telephone enquiries to the NPIC at the EAPCCT meeting in Amsterdam.
- Dr. Tracey gave a lecture on "Acute Poisoning" for the final of the FCA course.

### Meetings attended by Dr. Tracey

DATE	TITLE	COUNTY/COUNTRY
7,8,9 Jan	Meeting Scientific Committee EAPCCT	Utrecht
28 Jan	Meeting Board National Poisons Information Service, UK.	London
24 Feb	Lecture "Acute Poisoning" Final FCA course	Dublin
3 March	Meeting Scientific Committee EAPCCT	Brussels
4-5 March	Governing Body EAPCCT	Brussels
5 April	Visit to Forensic Toxicology Lab	Munich
3-6May	XX Congress EAPCCT	Amsterdam
June	World Congress of Anaesthesia	Montreal

### Publications/abstracts

- 1 T.W. Holohan, C.P. Humphreys, H. Johnson, P.B. Casey, J.A. Tracey, M. Laffoy, A.T. Clarke.  
*Sources of Information for Acute Poisoning in Accident and Emergency Departments in Dublin, Ireland.*  
Journal of Toxicology Clinical Toxicology 2000; 38: 29-36
- 2 P.A. McCormack, P.B. Casey, P. Barry, M. Laffoy, J. A. Tracey.  
Delays in administration of acetylcysteine in paracetamol overdose.  
Irish Medical Journal 2000; 93: 77-78
- 3 E. Donohone, J.A. Tracey  
*Restrictions on Sale of paracetamol in Ireland had no impact on the number of tablets ingested in acute deliberate overdose.*  
Journal of Toxicology Clinical Toxicology 2000; 38:251
- 4 N. Cassidy, P.B. Casey, J.A. Tracey  
*Impact of a nationwide nurses strike on telephone enquiries to the National Poisons Information Centre*  
Journal of Toxicology Clinical Toxicology 2000; 38: 239.

## Appendix 2. Top 100 enquiries

### AGENT NAME

### GENERIC NAME

Ethanol	
Paracetamol	
Unknown	
Valium	
Zimovane	Zopiclone
Dalmane	Flurazepam
Alprazolam	
Seroxat	Paroxetine
Melleril	Thioridazine
Calpol Paediatric Suspension	Paracetamol
Fluoxetine Hcl	
Distalgesic	Dextropropoxyphene, paracetamol
Diazepam	
Prothiaden	Dothiepin
Anadin	Aspirin
Ecstasy	
Ponstan	Mefenamic acid
Largactil	Chlorpromazine
Panadol	Paracetamol
Efexor	Venlafaxine
White Spirit	
Cipramil	Citalopram
Tegretol	Carbamazepine
Solpadeine	Paracetamol
Zolpidem	
Librium	Chlordiazepoxide
Ibuprofen	
Difene	Diclofenac
Lustral	Sertraline
Tramil	Paracetamol
Lexotan	Bromazepam
Anadin Extra	Aspirin, paracetamol
Normison	Temazepam
Aspirin	
Augmentin	Amoxycillin, clavulanic acid
Disprin	Aspirin
Nurofen	Ibuprofen
Metallic Mercury	
Zydol	Tramadol
Temazepam	
Eltroxin	Thyroxine
Flunitrazepam	
Methadone	
Amitriptyline	
Dimotapp Elixir Paediatric	Phenylpropanolamine, phenylephrine, brompheniramine
Essential Oil	
Information	
Bleach Household	
Petroleum Spirit	

Epilim	Sodium valproate
Heroin	
Marihuana	
Lithium carbonate	
Silica Gel	
Ventolin	Salbutamol
Warfarin	
Nortem	Temazepam
Motilium	Domperidone
Dettox	
Zispin	Mirtazapine
Anxicalm	Diazepam
Nu-Seals Aspirin	
DF 118	Dihydrocodeine
Gamanil	Lofepramine
Karvol Inhalant Capsules	
Zip Firelighters	
Zyprexa	Olanzapine
Cogentin	Benztropine
Domestos Bleach	
Hedex	Paracetamol
Prazepam	
Priadel	Lithium
Risperdal	Risperidone
Tylex	Paracetamol
Storm	Flocoumafen
Unknown Drug	
Piriton	Chlorpheniramine
Sudocrem	
Olanzapine	
Atenolol	
Losec	Omeprazole
Serenace	Haloperidol
Mogadon	Nitrazepam
Rat Poison	
Haliborange Tablets	Multivitamins
Noctamid	Lormetazepam
Rivotril	Clonazepam
Epanutin Capsules	Phenytoin
Amoxycillin	
Inderal	Propranolol
Aftershave Lotion	
Alkalis	
Milton Sterilising Fluid	
Perfume	
Round Up	Glyphosate
Aulin	Nimesulide
Parazone	
Stemetil	Prochlorperazine
Benzodiazepine unknown	
Paracetamol (Staggered Overdose)	
Risperidone	

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