

OPIUM INTAKE IN INFANTS AND CHILDREN IN BALUCHISTAN

Pages with reference to book, From 224 To 224

Sir,

Opium (powdered poppy Capsules) mixed with sugars and other plant products is a popular home made remedy for colic, cough and tonics for infants and children in Baluchistan.

Over a period of 7 years (1977.1983) 28 children between the ages of I month to 5 years were admitted in Civil Hospital Quetta due to opium poisoning accounting for 0.16% of all paediatric admissions during the same period.

Of the total admissions due to various causes of poisoning, opium was found to be the second commonest cause, but mortality (42.9%) due to opium poisoning was the highest of all (Table 1).

**TABLE – 1. Paediatric Admissions Due to
Acute Poisoning.**

	Admitted	Age	Deaths	Percentage of total admission with poi- soning
1. Kerosene Oil	32	10 months to 4 years	3	38.56%
2. Agricul- tural Insecticide	17	2 - 10 years	6	20.49%
3. Opium	28	1 month to 5 years	12	33.74%
4. Coal Gas	6	5 - 10 years	Nil	7.23%

History, physical findings, treatment and mortality in 4 cases of opium poisoning is summarized in Table II.

TABLE – II. Presentation, Physical Findings and Treatment of Opium Poisoning.

No.	Age	Sex	Respiratory	State of consciousness	Pulse	Resp.	Pupils	Re-flexes	Nalorphine	Stomach Wash	Antibiotics	Furosemide	Steroids	Others	Outcome
1	1M	Male	3 days	unconscious	slow and thready	laboured	constricted	absent	given	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Coramine	alive
2.	5 yrs.	Male	2 days	unconscious	slow and thready	laboured & crepts	constricted	sluggish	given	given	given	given	given	–	alive
3.	4M	Male	2 days	unconscious	slow	laboured with thick secretion	constricted	sluggish	given	given	given	given	given	Tracheostomy	died
4.	4M	Female	2 days	unconscious	slow	laboured	constricted	sluggish	given	given	given	given	given	–	alive

Early recognition of side effects of opium poisoning and prompt medical treatment are likely to reduce morbidity and mortality in children.

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