



PP21

Poisoning Exposure from Adulterated Chocolate-Like Slimming Products Among Children: A Case Series.

**Dr Sulastri Samsudin¹, Mahiya Nabila Rosaria Ab Hamid¹, Fahim Mohamed¹,
Nur Azzalia Kamaruzaman¹, Nur Afni Amir¹**
The Malaysia National Poison Centre, Universiti Sains Malaysia

Aim and objectives:

Recently, the interest in body slimming products has grown, resulting in a proliferation of appealing forms, including food like chocolate. Many of these products claim to only contain natural ingredients and are not registered as medication. The Malaysia National Poison Centre (NPC) has identified a series of accidental poisoning cases due to the consumption of adulterated slimming products formulated in the form of candies/chocolates among children. We aim to assess the attributes of chocolate-like slimming product poisoning in Malaysia, utilizing data from call inquiries received by the NPC.

Methodology:

This retrospective study was conducted using poisoning cases retrieved from the NPC between 2020 and May 2023. All incoming phone calls received were recorded in MyToxData system using a validated and standardized form designed for notifying poisoning cases. The study comprehensively covers the incidence rate, demographic particulars, and clinical symptoms observed in patients.

Results:

During the study period, a total of 29 cases were included with the highest case reported in 2021 (21 cases). All patients were exposed to slimming products through acute accidental ingestion. The amount ingested ranged from 1 pill to 10 pills (Median 3 pills, IQR 3 pills). All exposures occurred at home and involved children as young as 10 months old, up to eight years old (Median 3 years, IQR 2 years). However, most cases (76%) fell within the age categories of 1-4 years old. Main clinical features include insomnia (28%), hyperactivity (17%), palpitations (17%), facial muscle twitching (17%), and restlessness (13%). Others include nausea, vomiting, reduced appetite, and constant thirst. These symptoms exhibit similar characteristics of caffeine or sibutramine toxicity, thus implying potential adulteration in slimming products.



Conclusions:

Formulating slimming products in an enticing and enjoyable form such as chocolate escalates the potential for inadvertent exposure to children. The absence of well-defined legal regulations overseeing slimming products presented as food exacerbates the likelihood of product contamination with potent substances like sibutramine – a banned compound. Consequently, reports on toxicovigilance concerning these poisoning cases become indispensable to serve as foundation for implementing stringent regulation on slimming products to prevent poisoning incidents, particularly among children.