0800 **SURVEILLANCE OF POISON INGESTION CASES AT KIMBERLEY COMPLEX HOSPITAL, NORTHERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA**

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Introduction Internationally, poisonings are a major public health challenge. While accurate figures for intentional poisonings are limited, it is estimated that 350 000 people died from unintentional poisonings globally in 2002 (WHO, 2004). The vast majority of these fatal injuries occurred in low- and middle-income countries. In 2006, the Paraffin Safety Association of Southern Africa developed an injury surveillance system monitoring household energy-related burns and ingestions in 14 healthcare institutions across South Africa.

Aim To study the injury surveillance data collected at Kimberley Complex Hospital with regard to the ingestion of poisons.

Methods The data were collected at Kimberley Complex Hospital between November 2007 and December 2009 by reviewing records in the hospitals social work department.

Results Of the total 432 energy-related injuries recorded, 188 ingestion injuries were observed. The data revealed that older adolescents (23%) and young adults (44%) between 20 and 34 years were more affected by ingestions. Females (69%) were also disproportionately more affected than males. The most commonly ingested poison was medication (60%), paraffin/kerosene (29%) and detergent (5%). Interestingly, 45% of patients reported experiencing some form of emotional distress at the time of the incident. The vast majority of ingestion injuries recorded at this institution was self-inflicted (96%).

Conclusion A high number of patients at Kimberley Complex Hospital are presenting with self-inflicted poison ingestions associated with emotional distress or relationship problems. There is an urgent need to understand the psychosocial determinants of self-inflicted poisoning so that effective interventions are developed.