

Poison center data for public health surveillance: Poison center and public health perspectives

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Objective

To discuss the use of poison center (PC) data for public health (PH) surveillance at the local, state, and federal levels. To generate meaningful discussion on how to facilitate greater PC and PH collaboration.

Introduction

Since 2008, poisoning is the leading cause of injury-related death in the United States; since 1980, the poisoning-related fatality rate in the United States (U.S.) has almost tripled¹. Many poison-related injuries and deaths are reported to regional PCs which receive about 2.4 million reports of human chemical and poison exposures annually². Federal, state, and local PH agencies often collaborate with PCs and use PC data for PH surveillance to identify poisoning-related health issues. Many state and local PH agencies have partnerships with regional PCs for direct access to local PC data which help them perform this function. At the national level, the National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conducts PH surveillance for exposures and illnesses of PH significance using the National Poison Data System (NPDS), the national PC reporting database and real-time surveillance system.

Though most PC and PH officials agree that PC data play an important role in PH practice and surveillance, collaboration between PH agencies and PCs can be hindered by numerous challenges. To address these challenges and bolster collaboration, the PC and PH Collaborations Community of Practice (CoP) has collaborated with members to provide educational webinars; newsletters highlighting the intersection of PH and PC work; and in-person meetings at relevant national and international conferences. The CoP includes over 200 members from state and local PH departments, regional PCs, CDC, the American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Keywords

Poison Control Center; Department of Public Health; Center for Disease Control and Prevention; Collaboration

References

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