

# Annual Report 2022



## The National Poisons Information Centre

Healthcare professional line:

01 837 9964 / 809 2566 (24hr)

Public poisons line:

01 809 2166 (8am -10pm)

Website: [www.poisons.ie](http://www.poisons.ie)

Email: [npicdublin@beaumont.ie](mailto:npicdublin@beaumont.ie)

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# A snapshot of NPIC activity

In 2022, NPIC received a total of 10,281 enquiries.



98.2% of enquiries related to human poisoning



0.6% of enquiries concerned poisoning in animals



1.9% of enquiries were for non-emergency information



The busiest times of the day were from 4pm to 9pm



The busiest month in 2022 was October

## Source of enquiries to the NPIC



51.5% of enquiries were from members of the public



46.4% of enquiries were from healthcare professionals



2.1% of enquiries came from other sources

## Poisoning circumstances

59.5% of enquiries related to accidental poisonings

22.6% of enquiries were due to medication errors

13.1% of enquiries were for intentional poisonings

4.7% of enquiries related to other circumstances

## Social Media



- 1,270+ followers
- 1,434 Tweets
- 395.1K Tweet impressions
- 24,063 profile visits



- 6,500+ followers
- 426 Instagram Posts
- Overall Instagram reach of 10,207



- 32k+ Likes
- Overall facebook reach of 318,275
- 431 Facebook posts
- 4,508 profile visits

## Foreword

Welcome to the 2022 Annual Report for the National Poisons Information Centre (NPIC) of Ireland.

The Annual Report is based on data collected on enquiries to the NPIC from members of the public, healthcare professionals and others. Overall, there were 10,281 enquiries to the NPIC in 2022, a small decrease compared to 2021.



Staff continued to meet virtually for staff meetings, research meetings, conferences, educational webinars and NPIS/NPIC Continuous Professional Development events at the earlier part of the year. As the Covid-19 restrictions were eased, we introduced a phased transition period that enabled more staff to be present in the office safely. By the end of the year, we had resumed full on-site working arrangements. I am grateful to all the staff for their continued commitment to the service.

In 2022, the NPIC Office underwent a major refurbishment which required lots of preparation, planning and logistical organising to deliver. During the works, the NPIC team relocated temporarily to the anaesthetics department for 3-months. There was no loss of NPIC service during the move. We are grateful to the Anaesthetics, Technical Services, Security, Portering, and Information Technology Departments at Beaumont Hospital and the contractors who made the project possible. The refurbished NPIC office opened with modern furniture, a new layout, and extra security measures in the summer of 2022.

Some highlights of 2022 included the NPIC's close collaboration with the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) and the Health Services Executive (HSE). During the year, the NPIC notified the HSA of the increasing incidence of accidental poisoning with reed diffusers among children. In many cases, the NPIC could not ascertain the ingredients present in the chemical mixtures as the label did not have a Unique Formula Identifier (UFI). The HSA subsequently initiated an inspection campaign to ensure reed diffusers with hazardous ingredients are adequately labelled. Of the products inspected, over 85% were non-compliant. In the autumn and winter months, the NPIC collaborated with the HSE on safety messaging included on the HSE mychild.ie website for poisoning, and for a safety campaign on button and

cylindrical batteries in the lead up to Christmas. We are grateful to our colleagues in the HSA and HSE for their support, partnership and commitment to safety and poisoning prevention.

Thank you to everyone who uses our service and supports the work of the NPIC.

Dr Edel Duggan

Clinical Director

National Poisons Information Centre

## The NPIC team

The NPIC staff comprises of a Clinical Director, six Specialists in Poisons Information (SPIs) and an Administrative Officer. The NPIC's phone lines are answered by the SPIs who are scientists with additional training and postgraduate qualifications in medical toxicology.



The NPIC staff consults with NPIC Clinical Director for advice and medical information on the management of severe and difficult poisoning cases as required.

### Clinical Director

Dr Edel Duggan MB, BCh, BAO, MD, FFARCSI, Dip Med Tox

### Manager

Patricia Casey BSc, Dip Med Tox, FEAPCCT

### Specialists in Poisons Information

Nicola Cassidy BSc, M Med Sc, Dip Med Tox

Niamh English MSc, Dip Med Tox

John Herbert BSc, Dip Med Tox

Conor Hurley BSc, MSc, Dip Med Tox

Feargal O'Connor BSc, Cert Med Tox

### Administrative Officer

Sinead Doyle BSc

## The role of the NPIC

The National Poisons Information Centre (NPIC) was established in 1966 to provide telephone advice to healthcare professionals treating poisoned patients. Today the NPIC operates 365 days a year and provides a specialist telephone information service to assist healthcare professionals in the treatment of acute poisoning.

The NPIC Healthcare Professional Line is available 24-hours every day of the year for medical staff and other healthcare professionals.

The NPIC telephone numbers are;

- 01 809 2566 / 01 809 2568
- 01 837 9964 / 01 837 9966

The Public Poisons Information Line was launched in 2011 and provides a dedicated number for members of the public to contact the NPIC between 8am and 10pm every day. The telephone number for the Public Poisons Information Line is 01 809 2166 and NPIC staff provide advice to members of the public on whether they need to seek medical attention following an accidental poisoning incident or if they can be safely monitored at home. It is our policy to refer all cases of intentional poisoning for medical assessment.

The secondary role of the NPIC is to collect and interpret epidemiological data on acute poisoning. This information is used to monitor poisoning trends and establish and update appropriate treatment protocols as required.

NPIC staff members answer enquiries between 8am and 10pm every day. The UK National Poisons Information Service is contracted to answer enquiries to the NPIC outside of these core hours. Telephone calls are automatically diverted to the UK Poisons Service between 10pm and 8am every day and the extra call charges are paid by Beaumont Hospital.

## **Quality and training**

All enquiry records are peer-reviewed and stored as hardcopy and electronically on a Poisons Information Database named UKPID. All incoming and outgoing telephone enquiries to the NPIC are audio recorded for clinical governance and to assist with staff training. The Clinical Director conducts periodic audits to ensure the quality of the service and advice provided.

The NPIC maintains close links with the UK National Poisons Information Service and regularly contributes to and organises Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities with our colleagues. NPIC staff members regularly submit research studies to the annual congress of the European Association of Poisons Centres and Clinical Toxicologists (EAPCCT).



## Key statistics for 2022

### Time and date of enquiry

The National Poisons Information Centre received a total of 10,281 enquiries in 2022. 8,237 enquires were answered between 8am and 10pm while 2,044 enquiries were received between 10pm and 8am and were answered by the UK National Poisons Information Service. The busiest hours of the day were from 4pm to 9pm (Figure 1). October was the busiest month. The average number of enquiries per month was 857 (Figure 2).

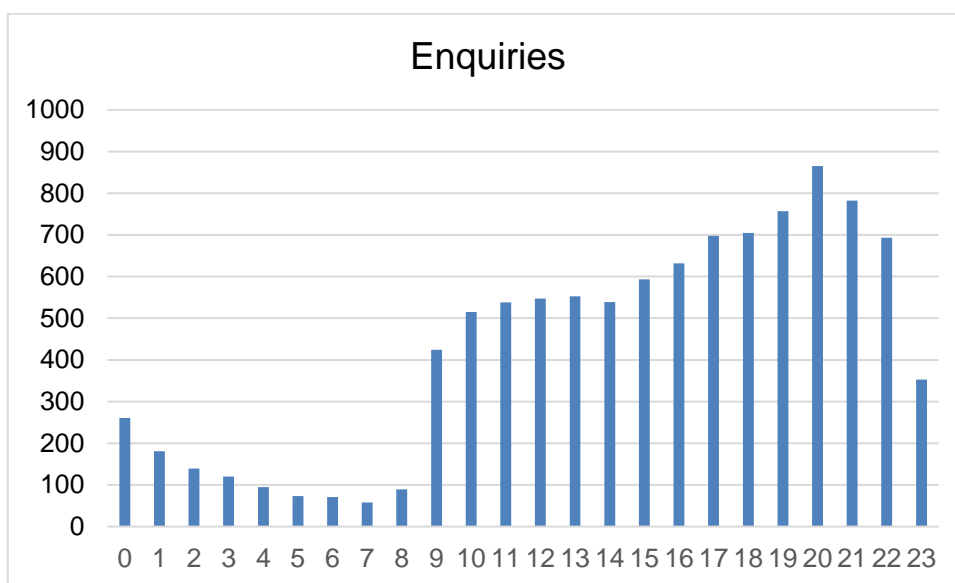


Figure 1: Time of enquiry to NPIC in 2022

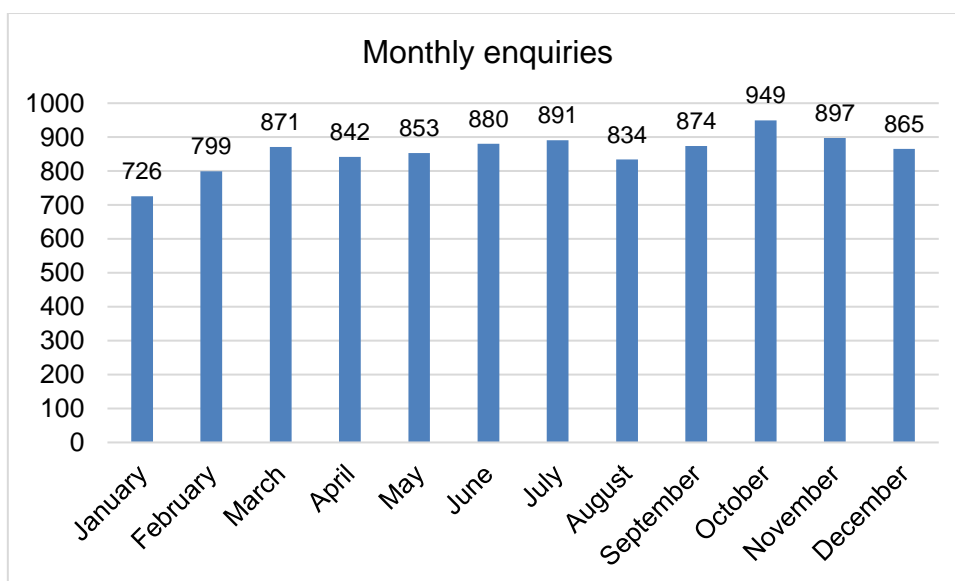


Figure 2: Monthly enquiries to NPIC in 2022

## Type of caller

The NPIC is contacted by different types of healthcare professionals, as well as members of the public and support services. In 2022, calls from members of the public accounted for the majority of enquiries (51.5%) to the NPIC.

Enquirer	n	%
Member of the public	5299	51.5%
GP/Primary care	2278	22.2%
Hospital	2113	20.6%
Community pharmacy	147	1.4%
Nursing home	164	1.6%
Ambulance service	71	0.7%
School/childcare	42	0.4%
Support services	27	0.3%
Dental establishment	47	0.4%
Veterinary practice	29	0.3%
Other	64	0.6%

Table 1: Type of Caller

## Enquiries from healthcare professionals

Approximately 42.7% of enquiries were received from healthcare professionals working in hospitals (n=2,113) or general practice (n=2,278). GP out-of-hours services that operate between 6pm-8am (weekdays) and 24hr (weekends) accounted for 1,651 enquiries.

CareDoc	645	DDoc	76	KDoc	32
SouthDoc	274	ShannonDoc	155	EastDoc	2
WestDoc	144	NowDoc	122		
MidDoc	128	NEDoc	73		

Table 2: Enquiries from GP out-of-hours services

## Enquiries from members of the public

The NPIC operates a public access telephone line every day from 8am to 10pm to give advice to members of the public. The NPIC has no dedicated funding to advertise the Public Poisons Line and relies on word of mouth, referrals from healthcare professionals, search engine results and the NPIC social media accounts to help raise awareness and direct callers to the service.

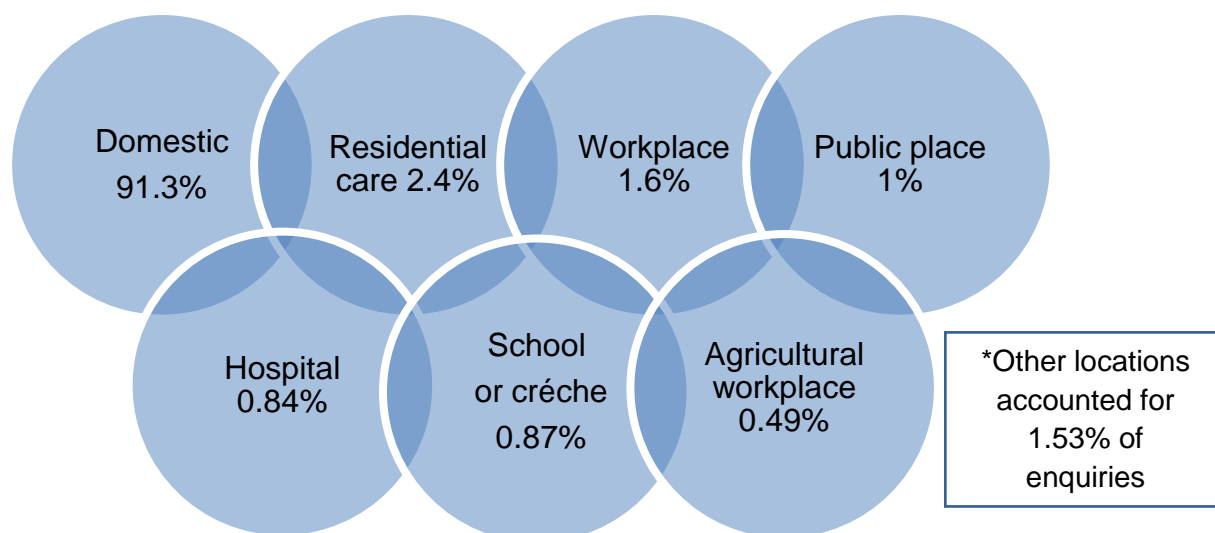
In 2022, the NPIC received 5,299 enquiries from members of the public, representing 51.5% of total enquiries. 4,106 (77.5%) of enquiries from members of the public involved children aged 16 years or under. The majority of enquiries related to accidental exposures (75.8%), while 19.3% of enquiries concerned medication errors.

4,078 of cases (76.96%) were asymptomatic when the NPIC was contacted. 982 (18.53%) of cases had minor signs and symptoms. 69 (1.30%) of cases had moderate signs and symptoms including repeated vomiting, CNS depression, and some cardiac features, and a small number of cases had severe features. The signs and symptoms were unknown for 89 (1.68%) cases and were not applicable (i.e. unrelated to poisoning) for 78 (1.47%) cases.

980 (18.49%) patients did not require medical treatment, 1,232 (23.24%) were referred to a hospital emergency department for treatment, 319 (6.02) patients were advised to contact their GP for medical assessment, and 2,165 patients were advised to seek medical advice if symptoms developed.

## Incident location

Most human poisonings occurred in the home or domestic setting (91.3%, n=9,215). A small number of poisonings occurred in nursing home/care home/residential care facilities (n=242), an occupational setting (n=161), a public place (n=101), hospital (n=85), school/crèche (n=88), agricultural workplace (n=49), and other locations (n=155).



## Geographic location of callers

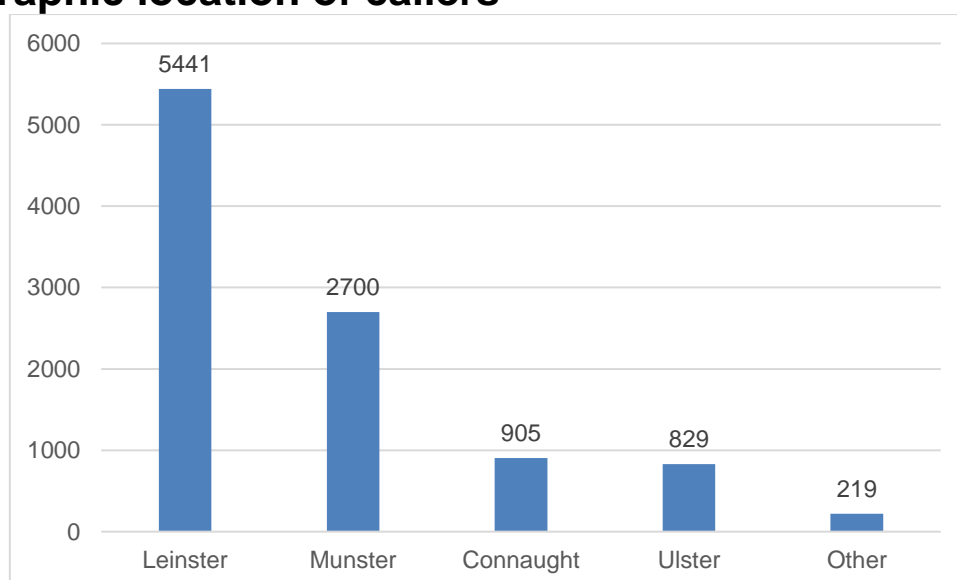
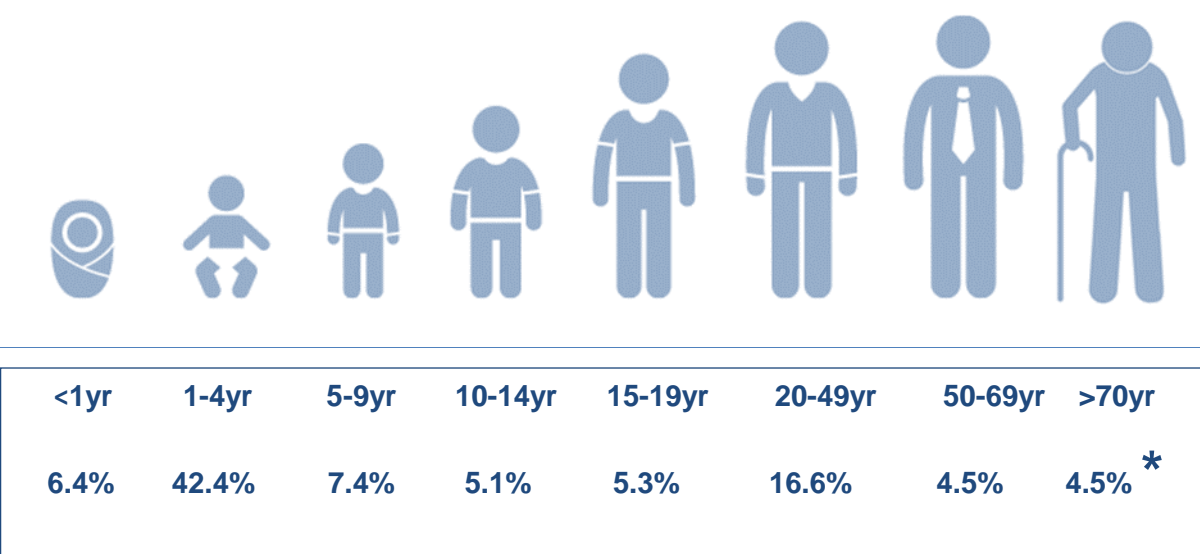


Figure 3: Numbers of poisoning cases according to caller's geographic location

## Demographics

10,096 enquiries related to human poisoning cases. The majority of poisoning enquiries related to children aged 14 years and younger 61.2% (n=6,177). The peak age was 1-4 years old (42.4%). 3,352 poisoning enquiries involved individuals aged 15 years or older. The specific age was not recorded for 5.6% (n=567) of cases.



\*5.6% age was not recorded

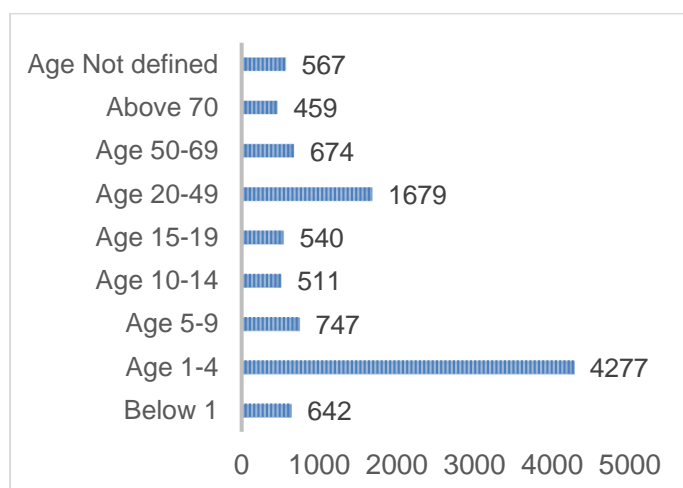


Figure 4: Age groups for poisoning cases

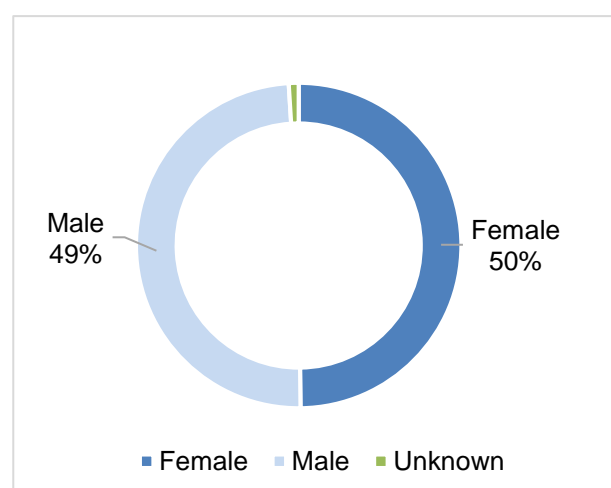


Figure 5: Gender distribution of poisoning cases

## Poisoning circumstances

The NPIC received 10,096 enquiries related to poisoning in humans. The majority of enquiries involved accidental/unintentional poisonings (n=6,009). 2,281 enquiries related to therapeutic errors with medications, 1,327 enquiries were intentional overdoses and 141 enquiries related to recreational abuse. The remaining cases were either adverse reactions, or cases of unknown circumstances or intent.

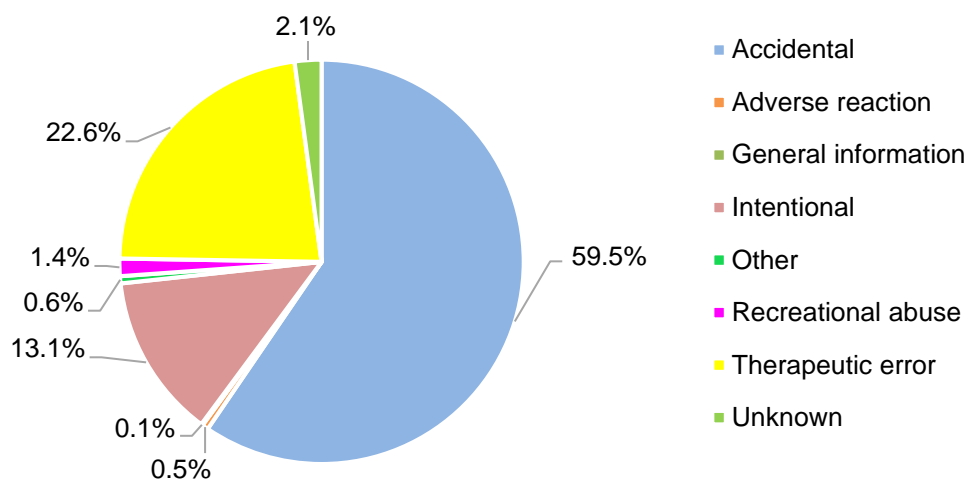


Figure 6: Poisoning circumstances

## Agents involved in human poisoning

Over 15,896 agents were involved in cases of human poisoning. Over 50% of all agents were drugs (including medications and drugs of abuse), 17% were household products such as fabric detergent products and multipurpose cleaners, and 13.8% were chemicals including alcohols, corrosive substances, essential oils and hydrocarbons. 1.6% of agents were unclassified.

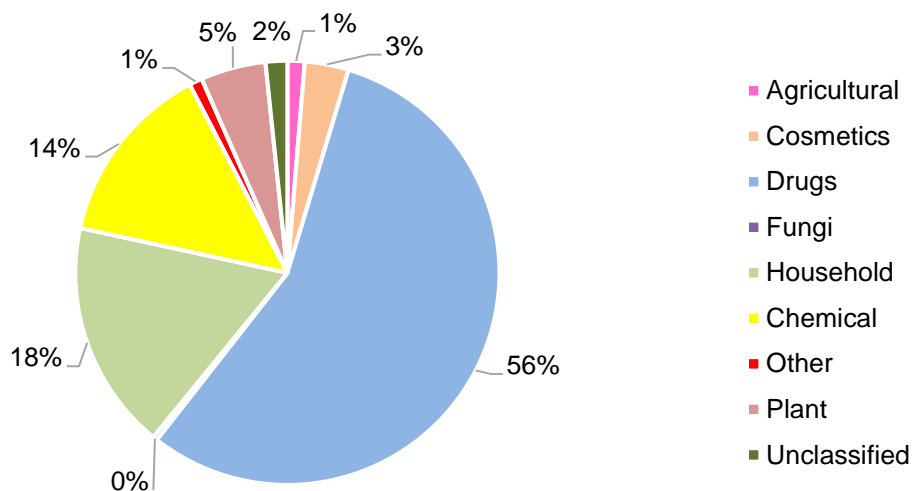


Figure 7: Agents involved in human poisoning

## Top 10 Agents

In 2022, paracetamol, ibuprofen and ethanol were the top three agents implicated in poisoning enquiries, similar to the previous years. The top 10 agents involved in poisoning cases are listed in Table 3.

Agents involved in poisoning	Category
Paracetamol	Medication
Ibuprofen	Medication
Ethanol	Industrial
Fabric cleaning liquid sachets / capsules	Household
Multivitamins	Medication
Surfactant / detergent Other	Industrial
Hand Cleanser / sanitiser	Household
Sodium hypochlorite	Household
Disinfectant / antiseptic / sanitiser	Household
Sertraline	Medication

Table 3: The top 10 agents involved in poisoning



## Top 10 Medications

The top 10 medications are listed in Table 4. Paracetamol was the most common medication consumed. Hypnotics, multivitamins and multivitamins with mineral supplements were also commonly taken.

Top 10 medications involved in poisoning	
1	Paracetamol
2	Ibuprofen
3	Multivitamins
4	Sertraline
5	Quetiapine
6	Cough syrup preparations
7	Diazepam
8	Alprazolam
9	Aspirin
10	Amoxicillin / amoxycillin

Table 4: Top 10 medications involved in poisoning





## Household Products

2,781 enquiries to the NPIC in 2022 involved household products. The most common products were fabric cleaning liquid detergent capsules, hand sanitiser, disinfectants / antiseptics / sanitisers, reed diffusers, bleach and dishwasher tablets.

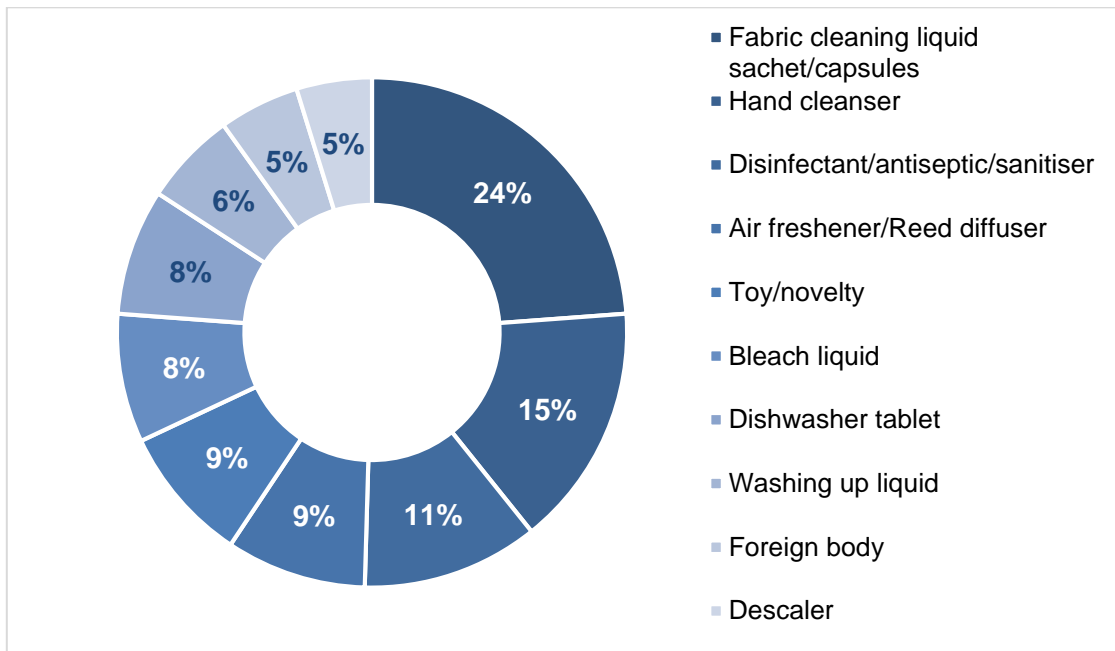


Figure 8: The top household products involved in poisoning

## Agricultural Products

Agricultural agents accounted for 209 (1.3%) poisoning enquiries. Enquiries about exposure to glyphosate-containing weed killers predominated (15.8% of enquiries about agricultural products). Other categories of agricultural products are shown in Figure 9.

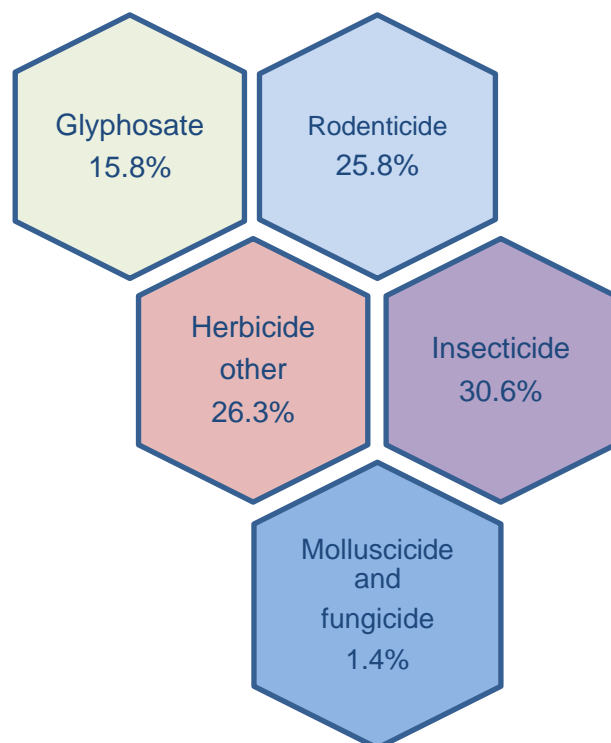


Figure 9: Agricultural products

## Drugs of abuse

There were 170 enquiries relating to 10 categories of drugs of abuse.

The main drugs of abuse included cocaine, heroin, cannabis / cannabinoids, ecstasy and amphetamines. Many cases involved more than one drug of abuse.

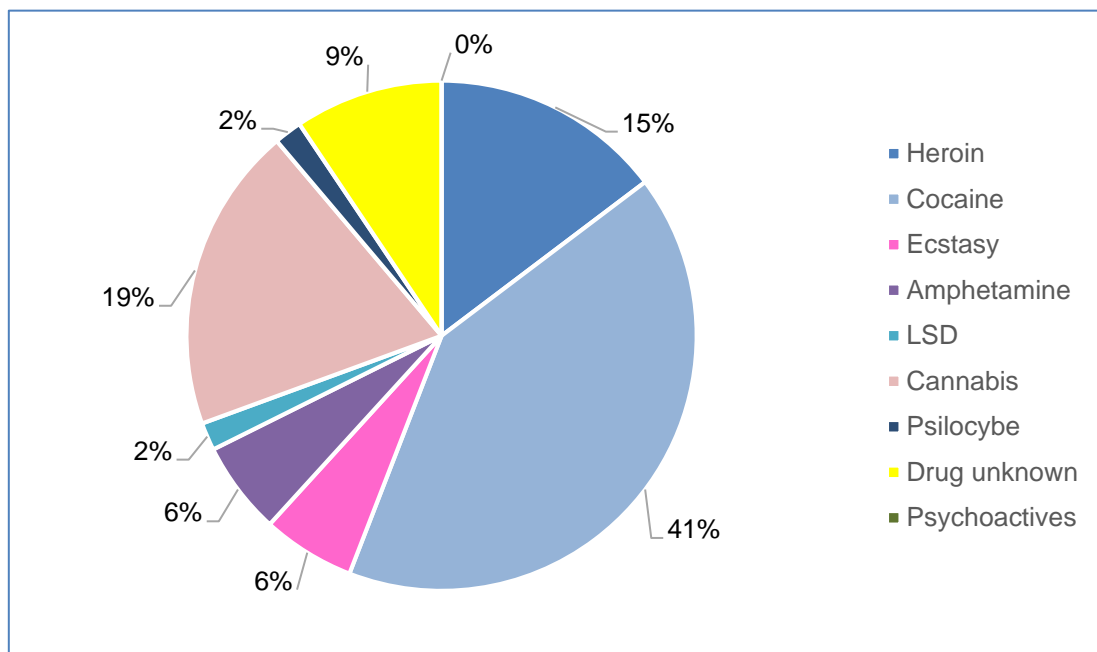


Figure 10: Drugs of abuse

## Poisoning in children

In 2022, 6,177 enquiries involved children aged 14 years or under. The majority of these enquiries related to children under 4 years of age (4,919, 79.6%).

80.3% of children were asymptomatic when the NPIC was contacted. 8.1% had minor or moderate symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, drowsiness or a mild local skin reaction. The symptoms were unknown or not applicable in 1.5% of cases. 7 patients had severe symptoms and there were no fatalities.



Medications were the most common type of agent involved in paediatric poisoning. The top medication enquiries concerned paracetamol, ibuprofen and multivitamin products, as in previous years.

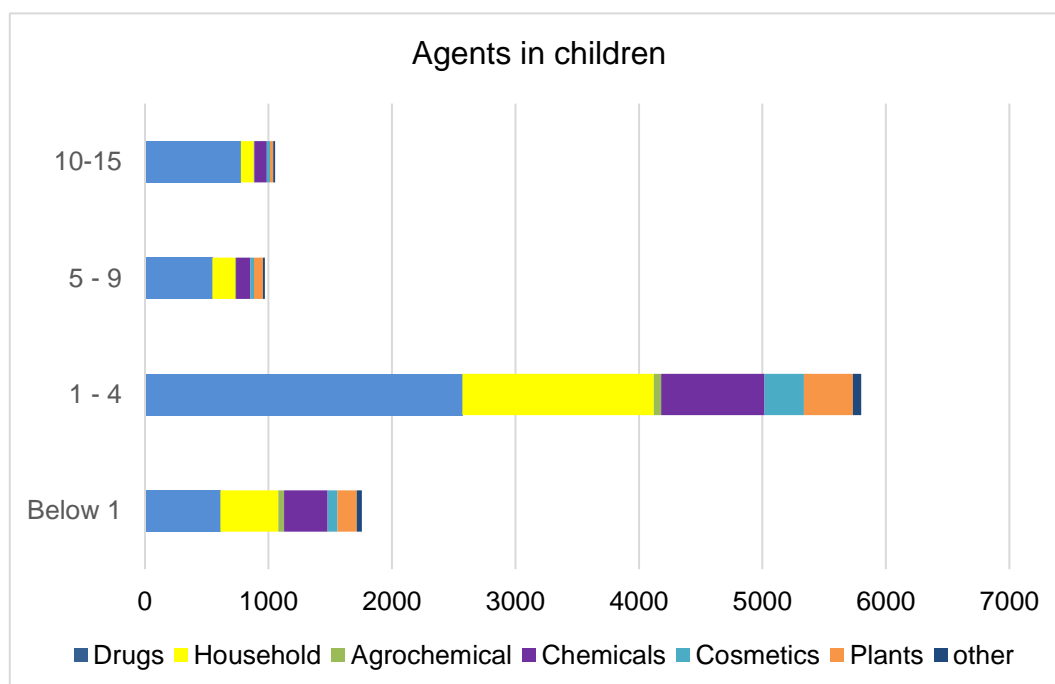


Figure 11: The types of agents involved in paediatric poisoning in 2022

## Signs and symptoms at the time of enquiry to NPIC

A Poison Severity Score (where signs and symptoms are classified as minor, moderate, severe, none, not applicable, or unknown) is assigned to each human case based on the clinical features at the time the NPIC was contacted (n=10,096). It is possible that some patients could have become symptomatic or their condition deteriorated after the initial contact with the NPIC.

- 67.5% (n=6,820) of patients were asymptomatic when the NPIC was contacted.
- 24.5% (n=2,475) of patients had minor signs and symptoms, for example mild gastrointestinal upset, drowsiness, and mild local irritation of skin, eyes or mucous membranes.
- 4.2% (n=427) of patients had moderate signs and symptoms including repeated vomiting, CNS depression, and some cardiac features.
- 1.4% (n=139) of patients had severe signs and symptoms including coma, liver function abnormalities, severe hypotension, and metabolic changes.
- The signs and symptoms were unknown for 169 cases (1.7%) and were not applicable i.e. unrelated to poisoning for 66 cases (0.7%)

## Clinical outcome of serious / unusual poisoning cases

154 cases were followed-up due to the severity, potential severity or unusual nature of their symptoms when the NPIC was contacted. NPIC staff subsequently telephoned the hospital and spoke with members of the clinical team to determine the health outcome for the patient.

- 91 patients who were followed up recovered completely
- 29 patients developed short-term sequelae
- A small number of patients had permanent sequelae or had outcomes that were classified as 'not applicable' (for example, poisoning was eventually excluded as a cause for the patient's clinical condition)
- 12 patients died
- The outcome could not be determined for 16 patients

We are grateful to nursing and medical staff for their help providing follow-up information to NPIC staff.

## Surveillance and research

The NPIC is in a unique position to conduct real time surveillance by monitoring trends in poisoning. For the 2022 Annual Report, we decided to highlight poisoning events with batteries, foreign bodies and toys which are common household items that may cause obstruction if ingested. Batteries may cause toxicity if ingested or with skin or eye exposures.

### Battery enquiries

- 86 enquiries received relating to 80 cases
- 79% cases aged 10 years and under
- 94% accidental exposures
- 90.7% involved ingestion
- 17.4% cases symptomatic
- 26% of enquiries related to button batteries
- 74% of enquiries related to other types of batteries



Figure 12: Battery enquiries

### Foreign bodies and toys

- 170 enquiries received relating to 166 cases
- Foreign bodies and toys included magnets, coins, waterbeads, bubbles
- 89.4% cases aged 10 years and under
- 100% accidental exposures
- 93% involved ingestion
- 16.5% cases symptomatic



Figure 13: Foreign bodies and toys

## **TOXBASE® enquiries**

**TOXBASE®** is the on-line clinical toxicology database of the UK National Poisons Information Service. It is the primary toxicology database used by the NPIC to provide information on the clinical features and management of acute poisoning.

TOXBASE® is used by Emergency Departments and Intensive Care Units in Ireland. In 2022, there were 17,765 TOXBASE user sessions by 40 registered users in Ireland.

## NPIC website

The website [www.poisons.ie](http://www.poisons.ie) has details on

- how to contact the NPIC for members of the public and healthcare professionals
- practical poison prevention advice
- educational resources
- information on seasonal hazards
- information for healthcare professionals
- and regulatory information for industry



The website highlights the telephone number for the Public Poisons Line so that members of the public can find it easily in an emergency. The Industry page provides advice for companies that have to register products under EU Chemical, Labelling and Packaging (CLP) Regulations.

In 2022, the NPIC website had

- 43,012 page views
- There were 19,240 unique first time visitors and 2,639 return visits to the website
- 69.1% of users performed an organic search using a search engine to arrive at poisons.ie while 18.65% of users searched for poisons.ie directly. 10.30% of users were referred to poisons.ie via another website (for example via [www.beaumont.ie](http://www.beaumont.ie)) and 1.95% of users arrived at the website via social media channels.

The main landing pages for visitors to the website were

- Home page (47.88%)
- Contact us page (32.32%)
- Industry-manufacturers pages (5.36%)

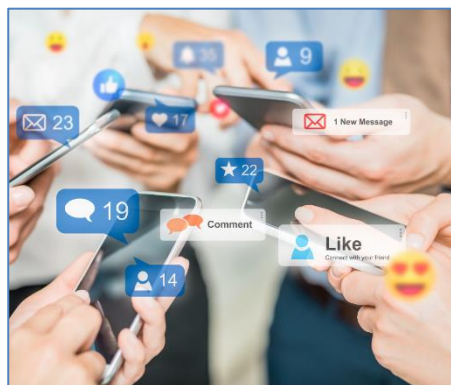
The most visited pages on the website were

- Home page (34.06%)
- Contact us page (23.07%)
- Public poisons page (7.20%)
- Healthcare professionals page (6.88%)
- Industry-manufacturers pages (4.06%)



## NPIC on social media

The National Poisons Information Centre maintains an active social media presence to increase awareness about our service and to promote poison prevention and safety in the home. The NPIC social media platforms should not be used in case of emergency for poisoning advice.



Our Facebook and Instagram (@npicireland) pages are primarily aimed at members of the public and healthcare professionals to deliver information and poisoning prevention messages.

The NPIC Facebook page had over 32,000 followers at the end of 2022 and an overall reach of 318,275. The NPIC Instagram page had over 6,500 followers and an overall reach of 10,207.

The NPIC Twitter account (@IrelandNpic) is primarily aimed at healthcare professionals to promote the NPIC service. We highlight information on poisoning trends and poison prevention messages, and share advice on the management of poisoning, and important articles from the medical literature. At the end of 2022, the NPIC had over 1,270 followers and had tweeted 1,434 times, achieved over half a million Tweet impressions, and had over 24,060 profile visits for the year.



## Poison prevention materials

The NPIC Poison Prevention materials are available free of charge and can be ordered online by healthcare professionals and members of the public from the website [www.healthpromotion.ie](http://www.healthpromotion.ie)

The resources available to order are;

- Poison prevention leaflets
- ABC of Poisoning posters
- Key fobs



# Poison Prevention Guidelines

If you think your child has been poisoned, call the Public Poisons Line  
**(01) 809 2166**  
8am-10pm every day

### ABC of poisoning in children

**A** Always store medicine and chemicals safely  
Keep medicines and chemicals out of reach and sight of children.

**B** Be prepared! Know what to do ...  
**If you think your child has been poisoned**

1. Stay calm.
2. Take the poison away from your child.
3. If the poison was eaten, make the child spit it out. Check inside the mouth and flick out any remaining pieces.
4. **Never** make your child vomit.
5. If a chemical has splashed into the eyes or onto the skin, wash the eyes or skin with tap water for 15 minutes.
6. The signs and symptoms of poisoning can be delayed. Always seek medical advice!
7. Take the product container to the phone, or to the GP, or hospital.

**C** Call the Public Poisons Information Line  
**01 809 2166**  
Open from 8am to 10pm  
Outside these hours contact your GP or hospital or call 999 / 112

Save this number in your phone ... you never know when you will need it!

[www.poisons.ie](http://www.poisons.ie)  
Poison Prevention Leaflets are available to order from [www.healthpromotion.ie](http://www.healthpromotion.ie)  
ABC of Poisoning in Children 2012. © The National Poisons Information Centre, Beaumont Hospital, Dublin.  
#N20275913C of Poisoning Poster

## Regulatory activities

### Working in partnership with the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA)

The Poison Centre’s workload associated with the hospital’s role as the appointed body under Article 45 of the CLP Regulation remained high.



The NPIC continued to upload industrial product submissions onto the Document Management System (DMS) to ensure that this product information was available to NPIC staff when answering emergency enquiries. The NPIC office underwent refurbishment and a security upgrade in 2022.

The NPIC continued to advise industry on the notification procedure for chemical mixtures placed on the Irish market that are classified as hazardous on the basis of their health or physical effects.

By the end of 2022, there were over 375,000 notifications for hazardous chemical mixtures placed on the market in Ireland made through the ECHA PCN portal.

The NPIC also received 544 new product registrations for industrial products directly in 2022 and uploaded these to the DMS. The Poison Centre handled over 700 queries from industry about the registration procedure, and checked the quality of approximately 870 product registrations.

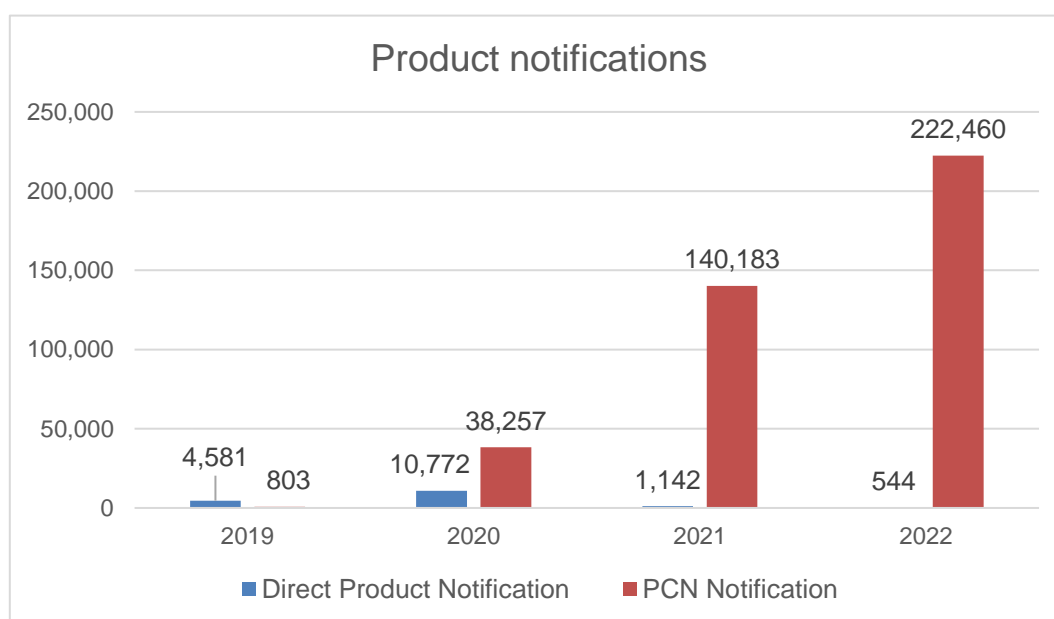


Figure 14: Total number of product notifications received by NPIC

## Academic activities

### Lectures and presentations

- A lecture on the "SNAP" 12-hour Acetylcysteine regimen for the treatment of paracetamol overdose was delivered to the Emergency Medicine SpR group at Beaumont hospital by Dr Duggan.
- Dr Duggan participated in 'Toxicology Fellow and Emergency Medicine' teaching at Beaumont Hospital.
- Dr Duggan spoke at the Beaumont Hospital Medical Grand Rounds on 29th March 2022. The presentation was on the "SNAP" 12-hour acetylcysteine regimen for the treatment of paracetamol overdose.
- Dr Duggan participated in the Emergency Toxicology CPD-SS courses at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland on 6th April and 30th November 2022.
- Dr Duggan gave a toxicology talk at the Irish Accident and Emergency Conference on 27th October, 2022.
- Patricia Casey presented a poster entitled "Can the NPIC provide product-specific advice for patients exposed to reed diffuser products (CA2022/157)" at the Beaumont Hospital 10th Annual Quality and Patient Safety meeting on November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022.
- Conor Hurley presented a poster entitled "Survey of antidote availability in hospitals with emergency departments in Ireland (CA2022/164)" at the Beaumont Hospital 10th Annual Quality and Patient Safety meeting on November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022.
- Dr Duggan delivered a toxicology lecture to the Forensic and Legal Medicine final year students at University College Dublin in December 2022.
- Niamh English contributed as guest lecturer for 'Clinical Toxicology in Practice' for the M.Sc. course in Regulatory Affairs and Toxicology at University College Dublin. The lecture was delivered online in December 2022.

## **Peer reviewer activities**

Dr Edel Duggan and Nicola Cassidy are peer reviewers for the European Journal of Clinical Pharmacology.

Nicola Cassidy is a peer reviewer for Clinical Toxicology.

Patricia Casey and Nicola Cassidy were abstract reviewers for the European Association of Poison Centres and Clinical Toxicologists 43rd Annual Congress.

## **Education and training**

Patricia Casey completed the Beaumont Hospital Management and Leadership Development Programme, with Merit (QQI Level 6, 15 FET credits) in April 2022.

Sinead Doyle completed the Beaumont Hospital Organisational Supervisory Skills Development Programme (QQI Level 6, 15 FET credits) in April 2022.

## Continuing professional development (CPD)

Due to the ongoing public health restrictions in place during to the Covid-19 pandemic for most of 2022, staff attended meetings, webinars and workshops virtually. Many of the online events were attended by several staff members.

- NPIS CPD 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022 virtual session - “Management of salicylate poisoning: urine alkalinisation, haemodialysis or both”
- NPIS CPD 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2022 virtual session - Mini-EAPCCT
- NPIS CPD 16<sup>th</sup> August 2022 virtual session - “Ironing out the wrinkles – managing iron overdoses”
- NPIS CPD 11<sup>th</sup> October 2022 virtual and face to face session - “Interpreting heavy metal concentrations - a guide for the bewildered”
- NPIS virtual CPD session on 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2022 - “Toxicological deaths in history – important lessons learnt?”

## EAPCCT Fellows webinars

- EAPCCT Fellows webinar on “Paracetamol poisoning” on 3rd February 2022
- EAPCCT Fellows webinar “Serotonin excess - an illusionary syndrome and a temptation of antidotes” on 29th September 2022
- EAPCCT Fellows webinar “All you need to know about cyanide poisoning for 2023” on 29 November 2022

## European Chemicals Agency meetings and webinars

- ECHA Interact Portal Users’ Event on 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2022.
- Nicola Cassidy and John Herbert attended the PCN Stakeholders’ Group Meeting virtually in December 2022.

## Other meetings

- John Herbert attended meetings of the Early Warning Early Trends group in February, August and November 2022.
- John Herbert represented the NPIC at the TOXBASE editing meetings.
- Dr Duggan was invited to become member of the Incident Management Team Hepatitis Group April 2022.
- Dr Duggan was invited to join the UK Hepatitis Incident Toxicology Cell Meetings in May 2022.
- “New European product notification requirements: Experience of the Irish Poisons Centre”. Presentation by Patricia Casey at the EAPCCT International Congress on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2022.
- Dr Duggan attended the Health Service Executive Communications Planning Group (CPG) meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2022.
- Staff virtually attended the 13<sup>th</sup> BfR User Conference on Product Notifications on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2022.
- Dr Duggan attended virtual meetings concerning the Philips Field Safety Notice recall.
- Niamh English and Conor Hurley attended the Current Topics in Toxicology course organised by the Welsh National Poisons Unit in Cardiff in October 2022.
- Patricia Casey attended an online meeting of EAPCCT Working Group on Poisons Centre Activities on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

## **European Association of Poisons Centres and Clinical Toxicologists Congress 2022**

Dr Duggan attended the 42nd International Congress of the European Association of Poisons Centres and Clinical Toxicologists (EAPCCT) Congress in Tallinn, Estonia, from May 24<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Patricia Casey attended virtually.

The titles of the three poster presentations from the NPIC were;

- “Setting up a pilot nutrivicilance service in a National Poisons Information Centre.” This study was undertaken in collaboration with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland.
- “The effect of a nationwide ransomware cyberattack on the Irish health service on the provision of poisons information in Ireland.”
- “Epidemiology study of baclofen enquiries to the National Poisons Information Centre of Ireland.”

Nicola Cassidy continued to work with the EAPCCT Communications Group to help raise awareness of the congress, the congress themes, and presentations via Twitter.

## Publications

Abstracts that were presented at the 42<sup>nd</sup> International EAPCCT Congress were published in *Clinical Toxicology*, 60:sup1, 1-108, DOI: 10.1080/15563650.2022.2054576

Setting up a pilot nutrivigilance service in a National Poisons Information Centre  
Nicola Cassidy, Patricia Casey, Niamh English, John X. Herbert, Feargal O'Connor, Conor Hurley, Sinead Doyle and Edel Duggan.

The effect of a nationwide ransomware cyberattack on the Irish health service on the provision of poisons information in Ireland  
John X. Herbert, Ronan Conroy and Edel Duggan.

Epidemiology study of baclofen enquiries to the National Poisons Information Centre of Ireland  
Niamh C. Walsh, Sinead Doyle and Edel Duggan.

## Committee membership

- Dr Edel Duggan is a member of the Clinical Standards Group with Directors from the UK National Poisons Information Service.
- Dr Edel Duggan joined the meetings of the Commissioning and Clinical Standards Group of the NPIS.
- Dr Edel Duggan and John Herbert are members of the Early Warning Early Trends Sub-Committee of the National Advisory Committee on Drugs.
- Dr Edel Duggan is a member of the Chemical Safety subcommittee of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland.
- Patricia Casey is a member of the EAPCCT working group on poisons centre activities.
- John Herbert is a member of the UK TOXBASE editing group.
- Dr Edel Duggan co-chaired the Nutrivigilance Steering Group Committee of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland.
- Nicola Cassidy is a member of the EAPCCT Communications Group.



## NPIC staff meetings and journal club

The NPIC held regular staff meetings and journal club meetings during the year. Some of the interesting presentations and articles presented by NPIC staff at the NPIC Journal Club meetings included;

- Cyclosporine as a novel treatment for amatoxin-containing mushroom poisoning: a case series. *Toxicology Communications* 2022, 6(1): 23-27.
- Distinguishing between toxic alcohol ingestion vs alcoholic ketoacidosis: how can we tell the difference? *Clinical Toxicology* 2021, 59(8); 715–720.
- Fomepizole as an adjunctive therapy for acetaminophen poisoning: cases reported to the toxicology investigators consortium (ToxIC) database 2015–2020. *Clinical Toxicology* 2022, 60(9); 1006-1011.
- Amanitin intoxication: effects of therapies on clinical outcomes – a review of 40 years of reported cases. *Clinical Toxicology* 2022, 60:11, 1251-1265.

## Data requests

- The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) requested data on Vitamin B6 and information on food supplements containing shiitake (*Lentinula edodes*), maitake (*Grifola frondosa*) and reishi (*Ganoderma lucidum*) mushrooms.
- The Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) requested data on codeine enquiries to the NPIC.

## Public relations and media opportunities

Dr Edel Duggan took part in 'The Curious Consumer' podcast with microbiologist Linda Gordon and spoke about mushroom foraging. The podcast is hosted on the Safefood.net website and was first transmitted in March 2022.

Dr Edel Duggan was interviewed for an article entitled "Protect your children: store medicines and pesticides safely" that was published online by the Farmers Journal in May 2022.

<https://www.farmersjournal.ie/protect-your-children-store-medicines-and-pesticides-safely-698920> ([www.farmersjournal.ie](http://www.farmersjournal.ie))

The HSE agreed to assist NPIC with social media coverage of poison prevention and safety messages via social media (August 2022)

Information about the NPIC service appeared in the HSE's Health Service News that is issued to healthcare professionals on Thursday 8th September.

A press release in collaboration with the Health Service Executive MyChild.ie was issued in December 2022 to raise awareness of Christmas toy and battery safety. Dr Edel Duggan was interviewed on Midwest radio, Highland radio, and East Coast FM.

Dr Edel Duggan was interviewed on Drive Time (radio) to promote the NPIC Annual Report 2021, in December 2022.

## NPIC and HSE collaborations in 2022

- Nicola Cassidy reviewed and updated 4 articles on the HSE mychild.ie website (August/September 2022)
  - Poisoning in children
  - Preventing burns from chemicals and household products
  - How to safely store household poisons away from your child
  - Poison risks to your child
- The NPIC consulted with expert mycologists to prepare safety advice for people collecting wild mushrooms for consumption. These messages were shared by the HSE social media team (throughout autumn 2022).
- Dr Edel Duggan and Nicola Cassidy collaborated with (i) the Communications team at the HSE Nurture Programme: Infant Health and Wellbeing / National Healthy Childhood Programme (ii) Dr Abigail Collins, National Clinical Lead in the HSE's Child Health Public Health Programme and (iii) the HSE Press Office to develop safety messages for a Toy Safety Awareness Campaign in December 2022. A press release was issued by the HSE on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

A series of media events took place following the press release

- Dr Abigail Collins, National Clinical Lead in the HSE's Child Health Public Health Programme was interviewed on RTÉ Radio Drive Time on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2022
  - Dr Edel Duggan, Clinical Director of the NPIC was interviewed on East Coast FM, Highland Radio, and on Midwest Radio in December 2022.
  - Articles featured in the print edition of the Daily Mail and online on RSVP.ie
- The NPIC prepared a series of poisoning prevention safety messages for Christmas 2022 ('Christmas Countdown' and '12-Days of Christmas') that were shared with the HSE Social Media Team. Some of these messages were used by the HSE social media team with their branding for their Twitter, Facebook and Instagram pages in December 2022.

- The NPIC prepared a series of monthly safety messages (2 posts per month for 2023) with images that were shared with the HSE social media team and the MyChild.ie team.
- HSE Health Service News (email) featured a link to Poison Information Awareness and the NPIC website in December 2022.

## **Joint press release from the Health and Safety Authority and the NPIC on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

Retailers and consumers urged to check the safety information on reed diffuser bottles following recent Health and Safety Authority market surveillance campaign.

Following information received from the National Poisons Information Centre (NPIC) in Beaumont Hospital regarding an increase in the number of children accidentally drinking the liquid contained in fragrance reed diffusers, the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) undertook a targeted inspection campaign to ensure reed diffuser and refills for reed diffusers available in Ireland do not contain any restricted ingredients and display the relevant safety information on the bottles.

- The number of calls to the NPIC about reed diffusers increased by nearly 300% between 2015 and 2021 (from 34 in 2015 to 133 in 2021).
- In 2020 the NPIC received reports on 78 children who drank reed diffuser liquid. Most of these children were under 3.

The HSA checked compliance on 41 different brands of reed diffusers available in Ireland. The findings of this inspection campaign highlighted that while many of the products sold did display the relevant safety information on the outer packaging, they failed to include safety information on the inner bottle as required.

Since the outer packaging is normally discarded after purchase, the lack of a hazard label on the diffuser bottle itself could result in a delay in the appropriate medical treatment of a child who is accidentally exposed to the contents. The composition of these products can vary so when the NPIC receives a call from a caregiver it's important that the composition can be identified correctly, to ensure patients receive the right care in the right place.

The HSA highlights to consumers the importance of reading the label before purchasing household products - since many household products contain chemicals which can have harmful effects following accidental exposure or when the safety information is not followed. Some household products may be harmful if swallowed, result in skin reactions or may result in long-term skin sensitisation to the chemical contents.

Yvonne Mullooly, Assistant Chief Executive, Chemicals & Industrial Product, HSA stated “On concluding the inspection campaign we continue to review the current issues around hazardous chemicals contained in reed diffusers for sale on the Irish market and any lack of compliance with packaging and labelling requirements. We would urge retailers in the first instance to ensure the products they’re selling contain the relevant safety information in line with chemicals legislation. We also encourage consumers to educate themselves on buying products that are safe. The Authority has guidance for both retailers and consumers available on the HSA website along with a podcast that provides consumers with advice when buying products containing chemicals online. I would urge people to engage and familiarise themselves with our available guidance.”

Dr Edel Duggan, Clinical Director at the National Poison Information Centre, Beaumont Hospital stated “Accidental exposure to chemicals can be very dangerous for small children and we work in close collaboration with the Health and Safety Authority alerting them to relevant incidents. If the liquid from a reed diffuser comes into contact with the eyes it can cause pain or if swallowed, it can result in vomiting, cough or drowsiness. It can also cause a rash if it comes into contact with the skin. Our advice is for parents, grandparents and childminders to keep reed diffusers out of reach and to read the safety information on the label. In case of accidental exposure, if the liquid is swallowed rinse as much of the liquid as possible from the mouth with water and do not to induce vomiting. If it comes into contact with the skin, wash thoroughly. If it gets into the eyes, rinse carefully with water for 10-15 minutes. Then contact the National Poison Information Centre (01 809 2166) to seek advice on whether medical attention is needed.”

**NPIC's year in numbers 2022**

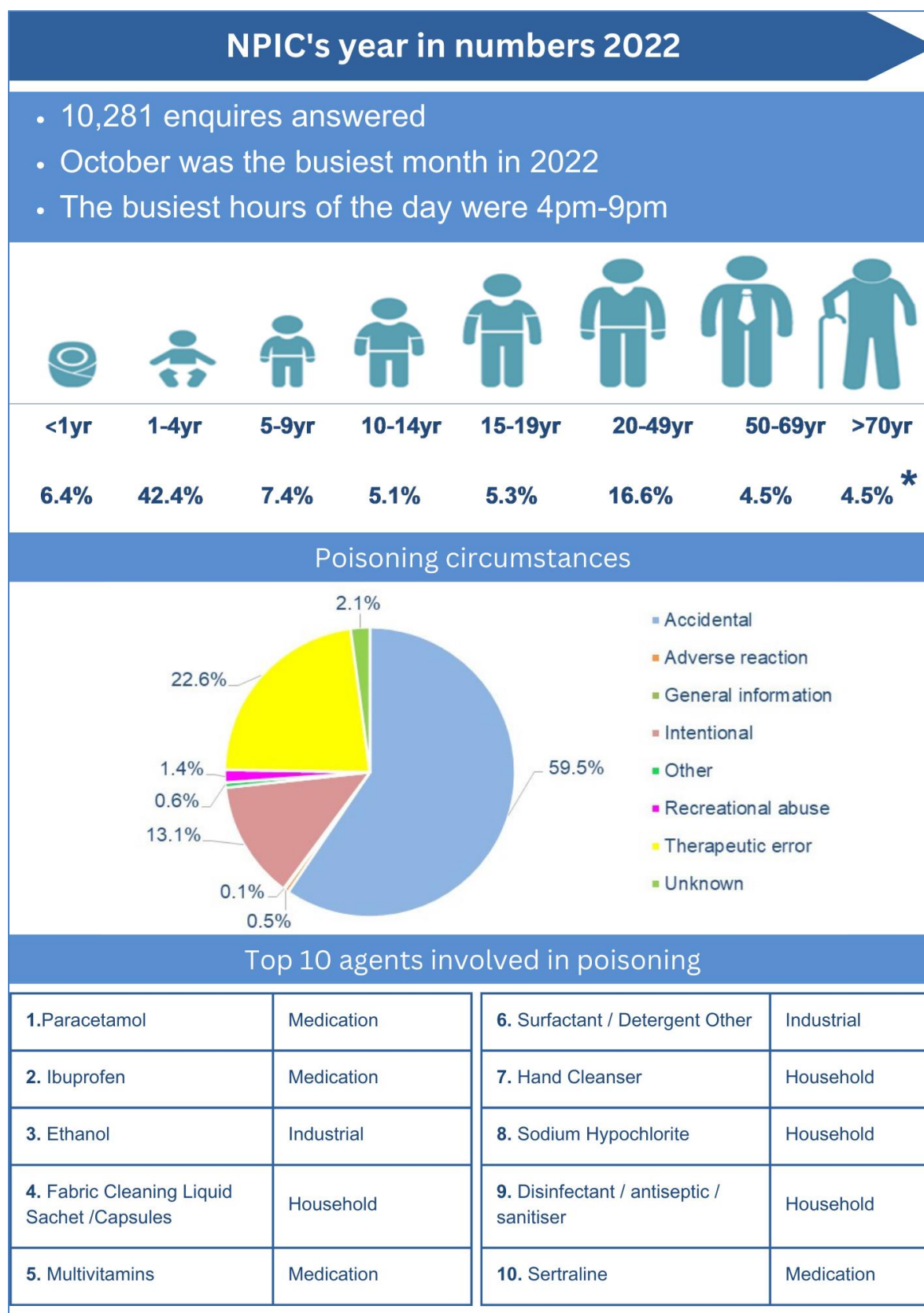


Figure 15: NPIC's year in numbers 2022

Contact details for NPIC	
Healthcare professional lines	01 809 2566 / 01 809 2568
24hr	01 837 9964 / 01 837 9966
Public poison line	01 809 2166
8am – 10pm daily	
Administration line	01 797 4211
9am - 3.30pm Monday-Friday	
Website	<a href="http://www.poisons.ie">www.poisons.ie</a>
Email	<a href="mailto:npicdublin@beaumont.ie">npicdublin@beaumont.ie</a>
	@NPICireland
	@Npicireland
	@IrelandNpic