

**COVID 19 and Pediatric Ingestions**

PEDIATRICS Volume 148, number 1, July 2021: e2021051001

**Background & Objectives:** To compare national trends in pediatric ingestions during the pandemic to a similar pre-pandemic period.

**Methods:** Collected data included age group, sex, substance ingested, reason, exposure and management site, disposition, and medical outcome. Clinically significant outcomes were defined as a moderate or major effect or death. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the study cohorts, and categorical variables were compared by using the  $\chi^2$  test. The significance level was set to  $\alpha < .05$ . The study was exempt from review by institutional review board.

**ACADEMIC P.E.A.R.L.S**

Pediatric Evidence And Research Learning Snippet

**COVID 19 and Pediatric Ingestions**

**Results:** There were 86,1626 pediatric ingestions during the pandemic, representing a **6.3% absolute decrease compared with the pre-pandemic years**. The pandemic period had an increase in proportion of teenagers and children less than 5 years of age, compared with the pre-pandemic years. There was a relative increase in intentional ingestions accounting for 10.8% of all ingestions during the pandemic period versus 10.3% during the pre-pandemic period (0.5% difference, 95% confidence interval: 0.4%–0.6%,  $P < .001$ ) In addition, there was a relative increase ingestions occurring at home during the pandemic period when compared with the prepandemic period (1.9% difference, 95% confidence interval: 1.8%–2.0%,  $P < .0001$ ). Ingestions of hand sanitizers increased by 43% (18 099 vs 12 653,  $P < .0001$ ) and melatonin by 70% (44 957 vs 26 431,  $P < .0001$ ) during the pandemic period. Additionally, melatonin ingestions supplanted analgesics as the most frequently ingested substance during the pandemic period. Whereas overall ingestions managed at a health care facility decreased by 14.2% during the pandemic, there was an increase in the proportion of adolescents ( $P < .001$ ), intentional ingestions ( $P < .001$ ) and hospitalizations ( $P < .001$ ).

**Conclusion:** Pediatric ingestion calls to poison control centres decreased during the pandemic. **However, there were significant increases in intentional hand sanitizer and melatonin ingestions.** Further studies are required to determine the long-term impact of the pandemic on pediatric ingestions to institute appropriate preventive measures and resource allocation.

**EXPERT COMMENT**

“There has been an abrupt shift in school and home dynamics during current COVID-19 pandemic. Ingestion related calls to poison control centres has declined due to combined effects of social restrictions, apprehension in seeking care at medical centre and increased parental supervision due to work from home advisories. The increase in the proportions of adolescent and intentional ingestions may reflect heightened social, emotional, and psychological stressors on this age group. Initiatives focusing on implementing support systems for this vulnerable population are warranted. The heightened hand sanitizer and melatonin ingestions parallel the ubiquitous rise in the sale and use of such products during the pandemic and ease of accessibility among children. This demands continued attention as methanol – contaminated hand sanitizer ingestions has severe adverse outcomes”.

**DR ROOP SHARMA**

Senior Consultant, PICU – Surya Hospital, Jaipur

M.D (Pediatrics), Fellow- Pediatric Intensive &amp; Critical Care, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital

Fellow- ECMO &amp; Pediatric Cardiac Intensive &amp; Critical Care, London, UK

With warm regards,

**DR MANINDER S  
DHALIWAL****DR. PIYUSH GUPTA**  
IAP NATIONAL  
PRESIDENT 2021**DR REMESH KUMAR R.**  
IAP PRESIDENT  
2022**DR BAKUL JAYANT  
PAREKH**  
IAP PRESIDENT  
2020**DR G.V.  
BASAVARAJA**  
HON. SECRETARY  
GEN. 2021 - 22Editor – Academic Pearls  
pedpearls@gmail.com**Reference**

Karima A. Lelak, MD, Varun Vohra, PharmD, Mark I. Neuman, MD, MPH, COVID-19 and Pediatric Ingestions. PEDIATRICS Volume 148, number 1, July 2021: e2021051001.