



newsletter

the official quarterly newsletter of the American College of Medical Toxicology

American College of Medical Toxicology

Editor

Kevin Osterhoudt, MD, MSCE, FACMT

osterhoudtk@email.chop.edu

Spring 2005

The President's Perspective

Keith Burkhart, MD, FACMT



The ACMT Board just completed its' mid-year meeting. Making a date for 10 medical toxicologists to get together is not an easy task. The reason is evident at the meeting. Every board member is hard at work advancing our specialty. In forthcoming newsletter editions each Committee Chair will provide a column about the accomplishments of their Committee and recognize some of the dedicated ACMT members who volunteer their precious time to support the College. With all the time demands in medicine today, thanks.

I also personally thank those who voted electronically on the 2002 Financial Audit Question. The membership overwhelmingly supported the Board's recommendation that we not perform a financial audit for the Fiscal Year 2002. We had a 60% participation rate, far beyond the 20% needed for a quorum. In

fact more than 50% of the Full Members voted not to perform the audit. The vote was 156 No votes, 15 Yes votes and 6 Abstentions. This use of electronic voting will save us valuable time at our annual business meeting in Orlando. You will soon be learning more about several proposed by-laws changes.

I know I will see many of you at the Annual Meeting of the European Association of Poisons Centres and Clinical Toxicologists (EAPCCT) in Berlin, Germany from May 10-13, 2005. The EAPCCT invited ACMT to become a member of the Scientific Planning Committee and to send a representative to the planning session. It was my pleasure to attend the meeting in January in Edinburgh, Scotland, during which the abstract selection process was completed. I encourage those of you have not attended an EAPCCT meeting to do so. I believe the annual meeting is the most internationally representative medical and clinical toxicology annual gathering. The quality of the meeting is excellent with plenty of opportunities to learn and to develop new collaborative relationships. The social events are always entertaining. For more information; visit (www.eapcct.org). Please feel free to provide feedback to me, so I can help the committee meet your needs.

continued on page 5

ACMT Present at AAPCC Mid-Year Meeting

Erica Liebelt, MD, FACMT

In an ongoing effort to support the importance of the ACMT's collaborative relationship with the American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC), Keith Burkhart, MD, FACMT, and President of the ACMT, attended the 2005 American Association of Poison Control Centers Midyear Joint Meeting of the Managers and Council of Medical Directors in New Orleans, Louisiana. Numerous ACMT members participated in their important roles as medical directors of poison control centers. Important issues were discussed at the Council of Medical Directors' meeting including the ongoing need for funding for medical direction of poison control centers by physician medical

toxicologists. In depth discussion on the utility of the Toxic Exposures Surveillance System (TESS) death abstracts ensued with regards to importance, accuracy, relevance, and dissemination of the medical information obtained. In addition, a nominating committee is being convened to elect a new Chair and Vice-Chair for the Council. Representatives from the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) gave an update on the federal Poison Control Program and funding. Other agenda items included an AAPCC update by Anne Flanagan, the new Executive Director of the AAPCC, and a CDC Surveillance Update by Ed Kilbourne, MD, FACMT. Although Mardi Gras was officially over, the carnival spirit always exists in New Orleans!

American College of Medical Toxicology • 11240 Waples Mill Road, Suite 200 • Fairfax, Virginia 22030
Phone: 703/934-1223 • Fax: 703/359-7562 • E-mail: info@acmt.net

ACMT Announces Grant Winners

Christine Haller, MD, FACMT

Erica Liebelt, MD, FACMT

The ACMT Research Committee publicly congratulates the recipients of the 2004 ACMT/ATSDR Research Mini-Grants for Preparedness for Chemical Terrorism or Mass Chemical Exposure Incidents. These competitive awards are made possible by the College's collaborative agreement with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. Each investigator is awarded \$7500.

Dr. Melisa Lai, a medical toxicology fellow at the Children's Hospital of Boston, and the Harvard Medical School, was chosen for her proposal, "Enlisting Regional Poison Control Centers to Provide Self-Perpetuating Local Push Pack Capability: Implementing National Hospital Antidote Database to Bridge Antidote Delivery from the Strategic National Stockpile." The monies awarded will help Dr. Lai design a centralized, internet-

accessible database to record par levels of antidotes used to treat mass chemical exposure/terrorism incidents kept at U.S. hospitals. Her mentors for this project are ACMT members Dr. Michele Burns and Dr. Michael Shannon.

Dr. Sean Bryant, Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine at Rush Medical School, and toxicologist with the Toxicon Consortium in Chicago, was also awarded this grant for his proposal, "Intramuscular Administration of Ophthalmic Homatropine to Prevent Lethality from Organophosphorous Insecticide Poisoning in Rats." The aim of this study is to determine whether pretreatment with Isopto(r) homatropine hydrobromide (5%) will increase survival in a rat model of acute, significant organophosphate poisoning.

All ACMT members are eligible to compete for awards offered by the college. More information pertaining to available awards can be accessed via the College website, www.acmt.net, and awards are also communicated to members by means of the ACMTnet medical toxicology listserv.

ACMT Members Involved in Snakebite Symposium

Under the direction of ACMT member Dr. Steven Seifert, the University of Nebraska is hosting a medical toxicology conference entitled, "Snakebites in the New Millennium." This symposium will take place in Omaha, Nebraska, Oct 21–23, 2005. Planned session topics will include: snakebite epidemiology; antivenom research and development; venom research; advances in snake cladistics; regulatory issues; institutional acquisition, care and handling of venomous snakes; and clinical management of native and non-native envenomations.

Why?

In 2001, the United States Food and Drug Administration approved the first new Crotaline antivenom in 50 years. Unexpected challenges encountered in the use of this antivenom have led

to a better understanding of the kinetics and dynamics of pit viper envenomation and the clinical management of snakebite. Non-U.S.-native species can be found in zoos, academic institutions and private collections, and practitioners must also have an understanding of the principles of management for exotic snakebite injuries. The past several years have seen dramatic developments globally in snake taxonomy, venom research, new antivenom development techniques and new antivenoms; and systematic advances including the creation of an online, interactive Antivenom Index and the publication of reviews of the world's clinical literature regarding the most frequent and/or important non-native envenomations.

continued on page 3

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ACMT Office:

The American College of
Medical Toxicology
11240 Waples Mill Road
Suite 200
Fairfax, Virginia 22030
Phone: (703) 934-1223
Fax: (703) 359-7562
E-mail: info@acmt.net
www.acmt.net

Toxicology Images of Interest

G. Patrick Daubert, MD

In Detroit, MI, a 2-year-old boy was evaluated for pallor. His hemoglobin was found to be 9.6 g/dL, and his smear demonstrated basophilic stippling. A blood lead level was subsequently found to be 57 mcg/dL.

The abdominal radiograph (left) clearly shows numerous radiopaque specks throughout the intestines, which are consistent with ingested pieces of lead-based paint. In urban sites within the eastern United States, pica involving leaded paint is commonly associated with childhood plumbism. The lower extremity radiograph (right) reveals increased bone density along the distal femoral metaphysis, the proximal tibial metaphysis, and other metaphyses. These so-called “lead lines” represent increased calcium deposition due to inhibition of osteoclastic bone resorption.



Abdominal radiograph



Leg radiograph

ACMT members are welcome to submit interesting images of toxicologists, or representing medical toxicology, for publication in future ACMT newsletters. Please include a brief description of the images. Submissions may be sent electronically to info@acmt.net.

The ACMT, as part of a cooperative agreement with ATSDR, maintains the Internet Library of Images in Toxicology in the Member's Only section of www.acmt.net. ACMT members are encouraged to consider contributing images to this library. Email info@acmt.net for more information.

ACMT Members Involved in Snakebite Symposium

continued from page 2

Faculty

Several ACMT members will serve as core faculty for this symposium including: Leslie Boyer, MD, Medical Director, Arizona Poison & Drug Information Center; Richard Dart, MD, Director, Rocky Mountain Poison and Drug Center; and Steven Seifert, MD, Medical Director, Nebraska Regional Poison Center (Course Director). Other notable faculty include: keynote speaker David Warrell, Professor of Tropical Medicine and Infectious Disease at Oxford University – considered by many to be the foremost expert on snake envenomation in the world; Sean Bush, MD (featured on Animal Planet's, “Venom ER”), Staff ED Physician & Envenomation Specialist, Loma Linda University; Bryan Fry, MD, Deputy Director, University of Melbourne's Australian Venom Research Unit; Dan Keyler, PharmD, Minneapolis

Medical Research Foundation; John C. Perez, Ph.D., Regents Professor and Director of Natural Toxins Research Center, Texas A&M University – Kingsville; Lee Simmons, Director, Henry Doorly Zoo; Craig Smith, Fitzsimmons Snake Park, Durban, South Africa; and others.

Call for Abstracts

The symposium invites submissions of technical papers and posters that involve the study of venomous snakes. Discussions are in progress to publish the abstracts and papers from the symposium.

More information can be obtained at:

http://app1.unmc.edu/cce/snakebites/index.cfm?webtype=graphics&L1_ID=1&C

(Editor's note: The Snakebite Symposium is not sponsored by the American College of Medical Toxicology; and no payment has been made to the College to publish this report. The description of the Symposium is offered as news relevant to the ACMT membership.)

Toxicologist Profiles: News and Noteworthy

Toxicology Treatment in Alabama



Erica L. Liebelt, MD, FACMT, was recently awarded a University of Alabama at Birmingham Health Services Foundation General Endowment Fund grant for her proposal, “Building the UAB Medical Toxicology Treatment Center of Excellence.” Her award was one of three given to enhance the infrastructure of the Academic Health Center’s patient-oriented

efforts to address patient care issues and associated outcomes. Dr. Liebelt was recruited in 2003 to Children’s Hospital and UAB Hospital to develop and implement medical toxicology services. She is the first medical toxicologist in the UAB Health System. In April 2004 she launched the first inpatient medical toxicology consultation service at both hospitals and started the month-long toxicology rotation for the UAB emergency medicine residents.

With these funds, Dr. Liebelt will be able to hire a nurse practitioner to help her with her solo practice, a program coordinator, laboratory medicine and clinical epidemiology consultation, as well as a Web consultant to develop and upkeep a Web page to serve as an educational resource and marketing tool to increase referrals. Her long-term vision is to grow the program and start a fellowship training program in 2–3 years.

Toxicology Super Bowl

In February, 2005, the Philadelphia Eagles faced the New England Patriots in Superbowl XXXIX. In support of their local teams, ACMT members Kevin Osterhoudt, Fred Henretig, and Michael Greenberg from the Poison Control Center in Philadelphia challenged ACMT members Michele Burns Ewald, Michael Shannon, and Edward Boyer of the Poison Control Center in Boston regarding the outcome of the football game. As shown in the accompanying photo, a very unhappy Fred Henretig displays the uniform of the victorious New England Patriots (also apparent in the photo – no concerns of the illegal use of anabolic steroids by Dr. Henretig). Meanwhile, the staff of the Poison Center in Boston, including Michele Burns Ewald and ACMT member Rick Geller (an academic visitor from California),



Staff of the Regional Center for Poison Control and Prevention serving MA and RI, enjoying cookies from the Philadelphia Poison Center.

celebrate with cookies received from the Philadelphia toxicologists. Both toxicology groups hope for a rematch in 2006!

ACMT Member Pioneers Novel Tox Practice

Medical toxicologists frequently need to be creative in cultivating rewarding careers practicing medical toxicology. ACMT member J. Ward Donovan, MD, FACMT, has created the PinnacleHealth Toxicology Center, a toxicology treatment center which may serve as a model for other members of the College.

The PinnacleHealth Toxicology Center is considered a “Center of Excellence” at the Harrisburg Hospital, and is dedicated to “setting new standards for the care of poisoned patients.” The Center consists of a telephone consult center, serving and supported by 45 hospitals and their physicians throughout Central Pennsylvania, and a 4-bed inpatient specialty treatment unit. The Center is staffed by Board-certified medical toxicologists, resident physicians from 6 training programs in Pennsylvania, Doctor of Pharmacy students, a Program Manager certified in the provision of poison information, and nurses with specialty training and experience in the bedside care of poisoned patients. This Center is one of the first of its kind in the United States.

The staff of the Toxicology Center, including Dr. Donovan, is pictured on facing page. For more information on this novel program, please visit the Center’s website at <http://www.pinnaclehealth.org/body.cfm?id=1001>.

(Editor’s note: The PinnacleHealth Toxicology Center is not sponsored by, accredited by, or affiliated with the American College of Medical Toxicology; and no payment has been made to the College to publish this report. The description of the Center is offered as news relevant to the ACMT membership.)

continued on page 5

Toxicologist Profiles: News and Noteworthy

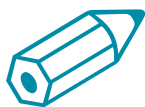
continued from page 4



Staff of the Pinnacle Health Toxicology Center

The ACMT Newsletter feature, “Toxicologist Profiles,” is your forum for reporting interesting news regarding toxicologists, their families, or other noteworthy events. Please send your reports or suggestions to Kevin Osterhoudt, MD, FACMT, Newsletter Editor (his contact information is available in the ACMT Membership Directory available on www.acmt.net).

EDITOR'S NOTE:



If you have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding the newsletter or other ACMT activities, please contact ACMT at info@acmt.net or call the national office at (703) 934-1223

The President's Perspective

continued from page 1

The Committee will be meeting in Berlin to plan for the meeting in Prague to be held in April next year.

In September I hope to see many of you in Orlando attending NACCT, September 9-14 (www.nacct.org). The Education Committee again has created a stellar program that will begin with our annual Premeeting Symposium on Saturday, September 10, 2005. The program is entitled, The Dark Side of Pharmaceuticals, and I thank Christine Haller, M.D. and Lewis Nelson, M.D. for their efforts. More details about the other ACMT educational offerings (the CPC, Scientific Symposium and Practice Symposium and the Annual Ellenhorn Lecture) will be forthcoming very soon.

Many of you know about my passion for the practice of medical toxicology. It was my pleasure to represent the College at the Mid-year medical directors/managing directors meeting of the AAPCC. My dream is to see poison centers develop toxicology treatment centers like the one operated by Dr. J. Ward Donovan at The PinnacleHealth Toxicology Center in Harrisburg, PA. See the related stories in this newsletter about the Council of Medical Directors meeting and the inpatient toxicology unit. Regarding practice, the Practice Committee is hard at work on a position statement for salicylate poisoning. Christina Hantsch, M.D. and Chair Charles McKay, MD have been leading this effort. This is now a working document that will hopefully get cosponsored by a national nephrology organization. I hope you enjoy reading the rest of the newsletter, including my promised column about being a regional and state medical toxicologist.

Finally my last thoughts on the practice of medical toxicology fall to recent world events, especially the death of John Paul II. This man truly had compassion for the poor and marginalized people in the world, as well as the plight and conditions of the worker. He certainly reminded me of the meaning of the Hippocratic Oath. In the practice of medical toxicology many of us have the privilege of serving those of whom he spoke and wrote about. I know he would be proud of the work we do, especially when we handle that call from the poison center or hospital at two in the morning. But he would also be proud of the humanitarian mission of ACMT for worker safety, our role in environmental toxicology, and the work, service and caring medical and scientific careers of all ACMT members. A final thank you for this care and work; too often not given or properly recognized.

Keith K. Burkhardt

A Regional and State Medical Toxicologist

Keith Burkhardt, MD, FACMT

As promised in my first President's column, I wanted to describe my first year as an Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) regional medical toxicologist. This newly created position was crafted through federal and state collaboration between Dr. Henry Falk, then ATSDR Director and now Director Coordinating Center for Environmental Health and Injury Prevention, and Joel Hersh, now retired but then Director of the Bureau of Epidemiology, Pennsylvania Department of Health. Pennsylvania has multiple CDC and ATSDR grants. These include a long standing state cooperative agreement with ATSDR, and recently CDC grants for Terrorism Preparedness and Environmental Public Health Tracking. None of these funds are used to support my position. Within ATSDR I work in the Division of Regional Operations, Director Tina Forrester, PhD. My federal duty point is Philadelphia, PA, headquarters for Region 3 that includes, PA, DE, MD, VA, WV and DC. ATSDR has 10 regional offices as well as a Washington, DC office. Many offices are collocated with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Within Region 3 ATSDR leadership has fostered an excellent working relationship with the Hazardous Site Clean-up Division of the EPA.

Many of you know that my previous background was the medical director of the Penn State Poison Center before its closure. In conjunction with the center, J. Ward Donovan had created an inpatient toxicology treatment center that managed over 500 admissions a year, most requiring critical care. We also ran an outpatient clinic for occupation and other poisoning evaluations. Occasionally, the center might get a media call about an environmental toxicology problem. Well, that has become more of my life now.

Just like in the poison center world each day seems to bring new cases/toxins. Some are routine from past experiences such as pool chlorine exposures, lead exposures from work or contamination from battery reclamation plants, homes with mine gases including methane or carbon dioxide, and symptomatic people from the landfill gas hydrogen sulfide. But I also get some cases that make good stories for CSI or other medical mystery television shows such as toxin tainted money, a forensic cadmium investigation by a coroner, patients sickened by an alternative medicine infusion of phosphatidyl choline, and clenbuterol substituted or tainted heroin. These later two crossed state borders and were initially identified by Dr. Steven Marcus of NJPIES.

Superfund sites also provide opportunities for medical toxicology expertise. Often ATSDR is asked to write Public Health Assessments or Consultations about the public health impact of chemical contamination. I had the pleasure of working the first site with groundwater contamination by resorcinol. The prevalence of groundwater contamination with trichloroethylene in Pennsylvania keeps me busy too. Vapor intrusion from VOCs is an evolving field.

In the state I partner with epidemiologists. I learn infectious disease and database management from them, while they consult me for all chemical and drug related questions. During the recent salsa related hepatitis A outbreak, I was asked how grams of acetaminophen these patients should be allowed to take per day; sound familiar? Chemical terrorism preparedness has then occupied most of the remainder of my time both for the state and federal governments. Finally, in my spare time 10% or two days a month I still admit and treat poisoned patients at The PinnacleHealth Toxicology Center.

As you can tell, I enjoy writing/talking about my new career. Please call, write, or catch me at an upcoming toxicology meeting. I know some of my colleagues have developed relationships with their states for medical toxicology expertise, and chemical terrorism preparedness grants. Please share your stories for the ACMT Newsletter column, Toxicologists Profiles.

The Dark Side of Pharmaceuticals

Don't miss this exciting and informative ACMT symposium, Saturday, September 10, immediately preceding the North American Congress of Clinical Toxicology in Orlando, Florida. ACMT members speaking will include Howard Greller, Rama Rao, Curtis Snook, Anthony Tomassoni, and Paul Wax. In addition, several guest lecturers will be adding important expertise.

"If you only knew the power of the Dark Side..."
—Darth Vader

**Don't forget the 6th Annual
ACMT Medical Toxicology
CPC Competition, to follow the
ACMT Pre-meeting Symposium.**

Notes from the Secretary/Treasurer

Erica Liebelt, MD, FACMT

The ACMT is dedicated to keeping its membership informed regarding the activities of the College. Please take note of the following helpful information:

- Members will be able to find the minutes from all ACMT Board meetings from the last two years on the Members-only section of our Website.
- The ACMT financial reports from October 2004, through December 2004, will also now available on the Website.
- There is a 2004 Financial Summary also available on the Website which demonstrates that as of December 31, 2004, ACMT had a net income of \$79,227 which is over the budgeted \$33,200. A significant proportion of this money is still coming from the ATSDR Cooperative Agreement; however, with the increase in dues, the College has been able to become more financially stable in its ability to provide more administrative and educational resources to its members.
- The ACMT Board polled Members of the College regarding whether to pay for and proceed with a financial audit of 2002 (the last year the College was administered by the PA Medical Society). In this poll, 177 total votes were received: 156 voted “no” – to not proceed with the audit; 15 voted “yes” – to proceed with the audit; 6 abstained. Therefore, a 2002 financial audit will not be performed.



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Help the ACMT Find Support for its Initiatives!

As a hard-working ACMT member, you may have contacts with commercial ventures capable of sponsoring one of the College's valuable programs. Sponsorship is a vital way to support College activities beyond those afforded through member dues. Many companies, both medical and non-medical, may enjoy the opportunity to share their name with a professional group of physician toxicologists.

Opportunities for sponsorship include, but are not limited to:

- Advertising in the Journal offerings of the ACMT
- Advertising in the ACMT Member Directory
- Sponsoring the ACMT Newsletter
- Sponsoring www.ACMT.net, or the Internet Library of Images in Toxicology
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- Providing a competitive research grant
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The American College of
Medical Toxicology
11240 Waples Mill Road
Suite 200
Fairfax, Virginia 22030
www.acmt.net

Nominations Invited for 9th Annual Ellenhorn Award

The American College of Medical Toxicology is soliciting nominations for the Ninth Annual Matthew J. Ellenhorn Award for Excellence in Medical Toxicology to be presented at the North American Congress of Clinical Toxicology in Orlando, Florida, in September 2005.

Purpose

The College established the Matthew J. Ellenhorn Award in 1996. Its purpose is to honor an individual with a distinguished career in medical toxicology who has made extraordinary contributions to the field. Such contributions may include teaching, clinical practice, research, or service to the discipline or the College.

Nominations

Letters of nomination should offer specific and detailed information regarding the nominee's contributions to the field of Medical Toxicology. In order to provide the most information to the Awards Committee, letters should be at least one page in length and be accompanied by a copy of the nominee's CV. Letters of nomination for the 2005 Award may be submitted by members of the College and should be received by **June 15, 2005**. Send letters of nomination to:

Awards Committee
American College of Medical Toxicology
11240 Waples Mill Road, Suite 400
Fairfax, Virginia 22030
Or preferably by E-mail to: Info@acmt.net.

Award Presentation

The recipient will be recognized at the annual meeting of the North American Congress of Clinical Toxicology and will deliver a keynote address on a topic of his or her choice.

About Matthew J. Ellenhorn

Dr. Ellenhorn (1923-1996) was a multi-talented physician and Medical Toxicologist with a distinguished career as an educator and clinician that touched many disciplines. He received his MD degree from The University of Southern California and trained in Internal Medicine at the University of Chicago and University of California, San Francisco. He served as Chief of the U.S. Army Cold Injury Research Laboratory, Chief of the New Drug Surveillance Branch at the Food and Drug Administration, and on the teaching faculties of the George Washington School of Medicine, University of Southern California School of Pharmacy, and University of California, Los Angeles School of Medicine. Dr. Ellenhorn also maintained a busy clinical and consulting practice in Medical Toxicology in the Los Angeles area. He was an early member of the American Board of Medical Toxicology, an examiner for the Board's qualifying exam, and an active contributor to toxicology literature and the annual toxicology meeting. The textbook, *Medical Toxicology: Diagnosis and Management of Human Poisoning*, originally co-authored by Donald Barceloux, MD, was a standard for the field and a tribute to his remarkable breadth of knowledge and clarity of thought.