

Leading Medical Toxicology Researchers Present Insight in to the Opioid Epidemic at the American College of Medical Toxicology Annual Scientific Meeting

April 23, 2019, Phoenix, AZ—The American College of Medical Toxicology (ACMT) just concluded its 16th Annual Scientific Meeting in San Francisco (April 11-14), where 162 research abstracts and more than 25 expert lectures on human poisoning were presented to an international group of more than 300 attendees from various medical specialties.

Many of the innovative research studies during the 4-day conference represented ACMT's commitment to addressing the ongoing opioid epidemic with eye-opening insights and practical solutions.

Neeraj Chhabra, MD, from Cook County Health in Chicago, IL, presented results from his study titled **“Fentanyl Analog Exposures Among Living Patients in a Large Urban Healthcare”** in which drug screens from ER patients are helping providers identify patients at risk for overdose death from heroin contaminated with fentanyl and develop interventions such as prescription-naloxone and medication-assisted therapy for those seeking care in the ER for any reason. “We were surprised how frequently fentanyl analogs were detected in living patients. This is one of the first time some of these analogs were detected outside the morgue,” said Dr. Chhabra.

In another study on fentanyl overdose titled **“Naloxone in the Era of Illicit Fentanyl: What Is the Dose?”** lead investigator Joseph Carpenter, MD, from Emory University and the Georgia Poison Center concluded that lower doses of life-saving naloxone are required to treat an opioid overdose associated with fentanyl, an important finding since naloxone is increasingly costly and can lead to shortages if over-used as recommended by older studies.

ACMT's expert members are on the front-line of emerging drug outbreaks with data from our collaborative national research network, ToxIC (Toxicology Investigator's Consortium). Among several ground-breaking ToxIC studies featured during the 2019 Annual Scientific Meeting, lead investigator Meghan Spyres, MD, from University of Southern California presented findings from **“Utilizing the ToxIC Network to Assess the Impact of Opioid and Benzodiazepine Misuse/Abuse in Older Adults”**. This study provides important insights to clinicians and policy-makers, because she concluded older adults misusing opioid prescriptions in combination with benzodiazepines such as valium suffer significant clinical toxicity and injury. Dr. Spyres suggests collaborative efforts are urgently needed to reduce the availability of these types of medicines in this vulnerable population.

[View all accepted conference Abstracts published in *The Journal of Medical Toxicology*](#)

Advancing the Toxicologic Care of Patients and Populations

The American College of Medical Toxicology (ACMT) is a professional, nonprofit association of more than 700 physicians with recognized expertise in medical toxicology. Medical toxicology focuses on the diagnosis, management, and prevention of poisoning/toxicity and other adverse health effects resulting from medications, chemicals, occupational and environmental substances and biological hazards. The *Journal of Medical Toxicology* is the official journal of ACMT.